THE STRAND MAGAZINE

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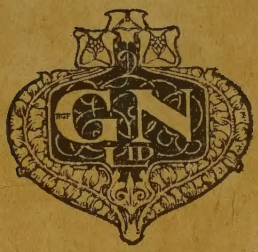
THE STRAND MAGAZINE

An Illustrated Monthly



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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

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"HANG AKU'S LONG TAPER NAILS GRASPED AND CLAWED AT THE HEADS OF HIS MEN AS THEY FLUNG HIM THROUGH THE WINDOW. A ROAR AROSE FROM THE MOB BELOW."

(See page 11.)

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. 56. JULY, 1918. No. 331.

THE CHINA MANDARIN.

By IANTHE JERROLD.

Illustrated by Frank Gillett, R.I.

MISS PENBERTHY sat before a clear leaping fire with a copy of the *Curio* in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Her foot tapped the fender impatiently and she frowned. She was reading one of her own articles, the latest to appear; it dealt with Chinese porcelain of the Laong Si period, and was illustrated with two full-page reproductions of her own famous Laong Si plates. The reproductions were printed carelessly and crudely and did no justice to the delicate beauty of the originals. Therefore Miss Penberthy frowned.

It was five o'clock of an autumn afternoon and already dusk was drawing down. Miss Penberthy read on to the end of a paragraph that blurred before her eyes and put the magazine down. The firelight gleamed on her silver shoe-buckles and shining silken stockings. A tall thin woman of forty-six, she had been beautiful in her arrogant youth, and still retained a certain aquiline attractiveness, although long residence in the Orient had sallowed her pale skin and a loveless life had hardened her narrow lips.

Her father, Sir Evelyn Penberthy, had been British Consul at Peking, and there she had spent eleven years of her life; she returned to England when she was thirty-four, and three years later Sir Evelyn died, leaving his only child with an income of rather under seven hundred a year, and one of the finest collections of Chinese curios in the world.

They shone around her now, those ancient treasures: for the walls of her drawing-room were lined with glass-fronted cupboards, filled with the quaint handiwork of long-dead Eastern artists. Between the two long narrow windows that looked upon Regent's Park a high cupboard stood, on whose shelves gleamed rows of plates coloured like Michaelmas daisies and monthly roses; this was the famous Laong Si porcelain whose beauty had been so unsuccessfully reproduced in the *Curio*.

And to the right of the fireplace, by Miss Penberthy's side, was the greatest treasure of all. This was a life-size mandarin of coarse china-clay, who sat with crossed short legs on a square rose-coloured cushion. A wonderful piece of work it was, extraordinarily lifelike and faithful to the smallest detail. The head was hung loose on a bar inside the body, and a touch would send it nodding with a grotesque effect of drowsiness. The broad yellow face was seamed with wrinkles and the great cheeks sagged heavily towards the chin. The eyes were closed, and it was as though the pouched and lashless lids had but just fallen in a moment's somnolence. A long narrow black moustache hung limply over the bosom of the dress, and at the corner of the mouth was a great brown mole from which three long straggling hairs sprouted. The fat yellow hands with their long, taper nails were clasped across the enormous paunch. Upon the head a black conical cap with a round button of red glass, and on the huge squatting body a robe of deep yellow, embroidered on chest and back with flying cranes.

The silent china figure was instinct with life and force. It was not an ornament that the person of average imagination would have cared to have in his living room. It drew the eyes with an extraordinary fascination, and filled the mind with flying suggestions of evil. Miss Penberthy, however, was an intellectual woman, but not an imaginative one. She cherished the mandarin because it had been given her by her father the year before his death, and for her father she had felt a great affection.

Findlay Osborn, the celebrated Eastern expert, had pronounced the figure to date from the seventeenth century, and it was evident from the embroidered robe and red-buttoned cap that the original had been of high rank. On a close examination Osborn had discovered a few tiny Chinese ciphers engraved upon one of the tassels of the cushion. He had examined them eagerly through a microscope, finding, however, to his disappointment, no name, but a short sentence which seemed singularly inapplicable. "He hath the voice of a bird," thus Osborn translated the inscription.

Even Osborn had cried out at the eerie suggestion of life that hung around the still figure, and had protested half-jokingly against its installation in Miss Penberthy's drawing-room.

Miss Penberthy laughed with gentle incomprehension of her old friend's point of view.

"He shall be my mascot," she said, "and I will always keep him under my eye. Besides, he was father's gift."

"Better not," said old Findlay Osborn; "but if you will have him here, don't look at him too much. Don't think of him too much. He has the devil of a way of drawing one's attention. There's a—I don't know what to call it—a *waiting* look about the thing. 'There are more things in heaven and earth,' you know, Miss Penberthy."

Miss Penberthy smiled again uncomprehendingly. She knew all that was necessary about the things of earth and had no use for the things of heaven.

So for thirteen years the mandarin had sat placidly on his cushion by the fire, hands folded, eyes closed, loose underlip a-droop; and always his yellow face drew the eyes with a horrible attraction, and always there was about him that air of listening and of waiting.

Miss Penberthy rose and went to draw the curtains and fasten the folding shutters before switching up the light. An owl hooted from the near Zoo, and there was a sound of brisk footfalls on the pavement and a murmur of voices.

And it was then that Miss Penberthy heard a noise that made her pause and listen for it to come again. It was a noise like the slamming of a hundred front doors at once, and it seemed to come from far away. There was no further sound, and she pulled the shutters vigorously together and fastened them. She would make up the fire and then go and get some tea. Her daily servant had gone home for the afternoon, and a pleasant fire, together with some newly-arrived reviews and magazines, had made her neglect her afternoon's refreshment.

She looked about for the poker. And there came again the sound she had heard before, three times in quick succession. Boom! Boom! boom!

And Miss Penberthy realized that it was the ominous sound of heavy guns in the far distance.

She went to the door, and just as she reached it the noise of guns crashed forth from Hampstead Heath; the floor shook beneath her feet. Crash! and she could hear the upward whine and whistle of the shells. As she went down the stairs with involuntarily quickened steps and turned the light up in the basement kitchen there came a deafening reverberation of sound, like the beating of a thousand hammers on an immense brass gong.

As Miss Penberthy filled the kettle at the tap and heard the crashing and whistling of the shells she was conscious of a heart beating rapidly, and of a quick sense of satisfaction in the knowledge that the kitchen was almost underground.

She decided to fetch a magazine from upstairs; it was no use sitting doing nothing, and the raid was likely to go on for some time.

As she reached the drawing-room on the first floor there was a crash that made the windows tremble in the frames. Miss Penberthy conquered an impulse to run, and walked slowly towards the door. It sounded very close; and one distinct sound like that probably meant a bomb; there was no reason why the next bomb should not fall on her own house; not likely, of course, and, of course, one was practically safe in the basement.

All this passed through her head as she turned the handle of the door; and at that moment the dying fire made a sudden leap and a bright tongue of flame shot up and illuminated the dark room for a quick moment. It shone especially on the smooth features of the Chinese mandarin.

"He's not very heavy," she said to herself, and went rapidly to the fireside; she clasped the china figure and raised it in her arms. It was heavy, but not heavier than a small child, for the china was thin and the figure hollow. She carried it downstairs amidst a perfect tornado of noise; the guns were never still.

She stood the mandarin gently down by the dresser, as far as possible from the window, and took breath. Now that the impulse was over she was inclined to smile at herself for bringing the thing downstairs.

So she made herself some tea, and sat down by the table on one of the uncomfortable wooden chairs. The racket of shells going up from the guns all around London was really deafening, and the noise seemed to grow louder every moment. She was conscious of a certain restlessness, the result of slightly disordered nerves, and was surprised at her own agitation. There was nothing to worry about, she told herself, and drew herself sharply upright. The chance of a bomb falling on her house was very remote, and supposing such a thing did happen—well! what must be, must be . . . and it would probably be a speedy death.

Miss Penberthy found herself listening intently to the noise of the guns, trying to distinguish the explosion of bombs from the crash of friendly defending shells. She heard once a metallic and shattering sound that seemed so close it might have been a bomb dropped in the opposite park. Once or twice she thought she could distinguish the heavy purr of machinery above the clatter and whistle of the guns.

She was conscious of an acute and quite unaccustomed desire for company. Miss Penberthy had always been friendless, for although

her dignity and decisiveness had attracted many women, and particularly young girls, towards her for a while, her absolute lack of emotion and a certain hard unbeautiful agnosticism had sooner or later repelled each one.

The gunfire ceased for several minutes, but broke out again with a more tremendous fury of sound than ever. Miss Penberthy got up and poked the fire, stirring it to a bright blaze, and then went and sat down again on a chair by the window. Her eyes, roving about the room in a vague search for something to occupy her hands, fell on the Chinese mandarin where he sat by the dresser, and remained there, held by an awful fascination.

Her lips fell apart and every pulse in her body seemed to be stilled; for the eyes of the figure were raised and a pair of dull, narrow, slanting eyes were looking straight into her own.

A cold horror seized her; she felt herself unable to move, and her eyes could not leave those sinister black ones that looked out at her unwinkingly from the dead china face.

With a furious effort she pulled herself together. It was absurd, ridiculous! Her nerves were perhaps slightly upset by the raid and she was imagining impossibilities.

She felt sick and sleepy; a great lassitude was on her limbs. It seemed to be from very far away that she heard the booming of the guns; their whistles and crashes were rather like the noises that resound in the ears of a patient under an anæsthetic. The words of Findlay Osborn repeated themselves over and over in her brain and seemed to keep time to the crashing of the shells.

"There are more things in heaven and earth," she found herself whispering with dry lips. She wondered in a vague, tired sort of way if she were going to be ill. Her eyelids were heavy as lead, but with a great effort she opened her eyes.

A blaze of light smote upon them, so that she blinked, and could not see before her for a moment. Miss Penberthy wondered if she were in delirium, for she was not sitting in her warm kitchen any longer, but standing in a huge open hall. It was daylight, and an extraordinary white brilliance was upon everything; then she saw that the domed roof far above her head was of crystal that glittered with blue and red points of light; through it she could see a deep blue sky.

Straight before her and about fifty yards away many people in loose clothes of brilliant colours were standing in a semicircle with their faces away from her; she noticed strange beasts and birds embroidered heavily on most of their silken backs. As she watched they raised their arms above their heads, and then bowed slowly towards the ground. Then she saw that they were grouped around a throne that stood on a low dais, and that on either side of the throne there were many more men standing stiff and still; they had the appearance of soldiers standing on guard.

The throne was of carven jade with thick legs cunningly fashioned like the talons of great birds, and a round canopy of fringed embroidered tapestry threw a shadow over him who sat beneath it.

The man who sat there cross-legged upon the throne was of huge corpulence, and was clothed in a robe of deep yellow; he leant negligently back, and his long, taper fingers grasped the carven arms of his majestic seat.

Miss Penberthy felt a chill at her heart. She knew, before raising her glance to the face, whose eyes they were that looked out from the shadow of the canopy. A huge pale yellow face with lax cheeks, loose hanging lips with deep lines at the corners, bulging wrinkled lids that overhung small dull black eyes; as she had seen the china figure of the mandarin sit day after day by her own comfortable fireside, so now she saw that figure in the flesh in all the pomp of his temporal splendour; and she was afraid, for the black eyes seemed to look straight at her with a malignancy that turned her fingers to ice.

Then memory and common sense came back to her.

"I am dreaming," said Miss Penberthy in a low, matter-of-fact voice. "There is nothing to be frightened of—nothing. This is a dream. Soon I shall wake up."

And she realized that although every one of the guard around the dais was looking straight at her, not one of them had given a sign of having seen her. So her fear left her, but she had still a vague uneasiness.

She became aware of a low monotonous chanting sound that came apparently from the semicircle of men who made obeisance round the throne. She strained her ears to listen, but could not distinguish any meaning, although she thought she heard repeatedly the words "Hang Aku," intoned in a long drawl; and at every recurrence of this name the singers raised their arms and bowed to the floor.

Miss Penberthy began to lose all feeling of alarm, and knew only the pleasurable thrill of the auditor, when loud music crashes out and the curtain slowly rises. Indeed the scene before her eyes might have been a tableau in some Oriental play. Through an uncurtained archway she could see part of another brightly-tapestried room, and a farther archway round which four armed men stood in conversation.

As Miss Penberthy watched, the singers stood upright, and finished their monotonous chant with a loud shout, raising their arms towards the roof.

The mandarin sat like a figure of clay, and gave no sign of having watched or listened to the performance. Not even his eyes seemed alive; black and dull, they stared out from his great square face like pieces of stone set in the head of some pagan idol. Miss Penberthy watched with fascinated attention for his first movement. The soldiers and all who stood around his throne seemed also waiting with hushed expectancy; not one of them moved; only the four men in the adjoining hall talked all at once with emphasis and gesticulation.

There was absolute stillness for the space of about one minute. Then the mandarin made a motion with his hand and spoke a few words

"A COLD HORROR SEIZED HER, AND HER EYES COULD NOT LEAVE THOSE SINISTER BLACK ONES THAT LOOKED OUT AT HER UNWINKINGLY FROM THE DEAD CHINA FACE."

without turning his head or moving his fixed eyes. Miss Penberthy had studied the Chinese language and understood it well, but the tone of the great mandarin's voice was so strange and unexpected that she started with surprise and horror and lost the purport of his speech. It was an extraordinary voice to proceed from that massive figure. It was thin and high, but perfectly clear, and gave the effect of being heard from a great distance. Rather pretty in tone and with a slightly laboured enunciation, it was like the voice of a child heard over the telephone. Each syllable was preceded by a kind of shrill whistling noise, which might have been due to some defect in the formation of the throat.

The calmly spoken words seemed to cause surprise and dismay among his attendants. There was consternation in their movements and expression, and a hum of subdued talk arose among them. Two of them stepped out and stood before the throne as if awaiting orders. They were both clothed in coats of fine chain-mail and wore flat-topped helmets. The mandarin spoke again, his body still immobile and his eyes fixed on space. The two men looked at one another with a strange hesitation; then they bowed and went together out through the archway and disappeared.

The hum of talk died down and there was a breathless silence. It was then that Miss Penberthy first became aware of an intermittent low noise that seemed to come from outside the apartment in which she stood. She noticed also a great restlessness on the part of an armoured man who stood with his back to the window; he seemed unable to remain with his eyes rigidly to the front, but ever and again, as the noise of muttering grew louder, would turn his head uneasily and glance down out of the window with an expression on his face that was like fear. Still the great mandarin sat relaxed and silent on his carven throne, his hands showing like wax against the dark green jade.

There came the jangling sound of armour, and the two men who had left the room at the bidding of their lord returned, walking side by side. They were followed by an elderly man who walked slowly and uncertainly. Miss Penberthy saw that his ankles were joined by a fine steel chain about a foot in length. There was a metal band also on each of his wrists, and these were joined by a long chain, which swung as he walked, almost to the hem of his long blue robe. He was thin and bent, and though his face was but lightly lined his long mustachios were grey. His bald head was uncovered and gleamed like polished sandalwood. An awkward and ungainly figure he was, but not without a certain dignity; for the expression of his face was calm and benignant, and he kept his black eyes fixed proudly before him as though disdaining to show any interest in his surroundings.

Shuffling and stumbling, he walked a few paces behind his glittering guard until they reached the foot of the throne, where two soldiers bowed their heads before their master and took their places in the ranks once more.

The blue-robed prisoner halted in front of the throne. The mandarin who sat there slowly turned his head until his small eyes rested on the shrunken figure before him. The old man seemed to stiffen under that stony gaze and raised his chin. Then the mandarin slowly parted his lips and Miss Penberthy shrank as she heard again that horrible whistling breath:—

"So Amun-Ling crosses for the first time the threshold of Hang-Aku! I bid thee welcome, Amun-Ling!"

The prisoner answered not a word, and the gentle voice went on:—

"Dost thou not admire my splendid halls, O Amun-Ling?"

Amun-Ling answered evenly, and his deep voice was a strange contrast to that eerie whispering:—

"The floors of thy house, O Hang-Aku, are made with dead men's bones; are not thy tapestries, O tyrant, worked with the hairs of dead men and dyed in the spilt blood of the people? O usurper and thief, do not the walls of thy palace echo with death-cries and curses? How then should I admire thy splendid halls, O Hang-Aku?"

"Yet, having entered, shalt thou never leave them, Amun-Ling. Thou hast looked thy last on the faces of the mob, and hast spoken thy last rebel words in the public squares. Had it not been for thee my conquered people would have been long ago subdued and content. For a long while thou hast been a thorn in my flesh; but it will be so no longer . . . . Thine end is at hand, O Amun-Ling."

There was a very short silence, broken by the deep voice of the prisoner:—

"And thine, O Hang-Aku!"

He went on:—

"The people love me, Hang-Aku; thee they curse. Think well then before thou causest me harm lest in my doom thou doomest thine own life. Thy people are to be feared, O tyrant! hunger and misery have made them strong as wolves."

"Nay," smiled the mandarin, "the people fear me. Have I not conquered them? When the mountain vultures have made a scanty meal of thy dead body, then will my people remember my power and tremble."

"Thou art a fool, O Hang-Aku!" responded the other evenly. "Sitting here in thy great palace in the midst of thine evilly-gotten wealth, what dost thou know of the people thou hast conquered? Thou plannest how to starve and torture them, and how to steal the little that remains to them, but how mayest thou estimate their power or the fury of their hatred? . . . Yea," he went on with a rising voice and glancing around him at the hushed rows of men on either side, "yea, thine own servants know better the temper of the people than thou dost. . . . Fool! even at this moment the multitude shout around thy palace-gates and the soldiers of thy body-guard tremble to hear it. Listen!" he cried, suddenly turning towards the window with raised arms.

"FOR A LONG WHILE THOU HAST BEEN A THORN IN MY FLESH; BUT IT WILL BE SO NO LONGER. THINE END IS AT HAND, Ó AMUN-LING."

In the hush that followed, the noise that Miss Penberthy had heard before was plainly audible; a muttering, rumbling noise that rose and sank, with now and then a distinct sound of far-away shouting. All eyes followed the direction of Amun-Ling's uplifted hands and looked towards the great window.

There came the sibilant whisper of Hang-Aku's unearthly voice, "What is there to be seen?"

"There is a great multitude, sire, about the palace-gates."

"Canst thou hear what words they shout?"

"Sire, they call repeatedly the name of Amun-Ling," answered the soldier, and his voice was agitated.

"Are they armed?"

"A few only, sire . . . but they are in great numbers . . . a great multitude, sire——" His voice died away; fear was written very plainly on his face.

Hang-Aku made an impatient movement with his hand as if in dismissal of a trivial annoyance; he turned to Amun-Ling, who still stood with his thin arms uplifted like a statue of vengeance.

"It had been well for thee, O Amun-Ling, if thou hadst admitted my strength and joined my councils long ago. Thou hast the confidence of these my conquered people and they would have followed thee into contented submission. I would have given thee power and wealth, far more than was thy portion under the rule of that lean fool, my cousin . . . Thou didst choose unwisely, Amun-Ling, and the price of thine unwisdom is thy death." He made a motion towards those of his guard who stood nearest him. "Let my commands be carried out."

One of the soldiers stepped out from the ranks and hesitated. He made no movement to lay hands on the prisoner, but stood as if in doubt, casting glances at his companions, who whispered agitatedly among themselves.

There was a pause; then Hang-Aku said, gently:—

"I have commanded."

Still there was no movement on the part of his followers. The great mandarin turned upon them.

"Have I not commanded you, dogs?" his terrible lisping voice broke forth. "Why do ye hesitate?"

"Sire," said one of them, apprehensively, "the multitude . . . have burst the outer gates . . . Sire, they call the name of Amun-Ling."

At that Hang-Aku rose to his feet with a face contorted with anger.

"Fools and cowards, I have commanded you! Am I not your master? What if a hundred lean rebels have entered the flimsy outer gate? Are there not guards around my palace-walls? Let my commands be carried out!"

Under those compelling eyes a second armed man stepped out and joined the first. With a forced and jerky resolution they marched a few paces to where Amun-Ling stood motionless and laid their hands upon his arms. Hang-Aku seated himself once more, a deep frown still upon his wrinkled forehead. The noise of shouting

outside the building grew louder, and Miss Penberthy could easily distinguish hoarse cries of "Amun-Ling!"

Amun-Ling shook off with a sudden movement the grasp of his captors. Raising his hand with a vehement gesture, he cried in a terrible voice:—

"I curse thee, Hang-Aku! Thou sendest me to my death, but thy death also is at hand! Thou dost not know thy danger, Hang-Aku, and I rejoice that it is so. Thou hast heard cries for mercy, and hast smiled; thou hast heard screams of agony, and hast laughed; thou hast listened to the groans of the dying and found them sweet and grateful to thine ear. Now thou hearest the roar for vengeance of a maddened people and thou payest no heed. Murderer, usurper, tyrant, thou hast been called, and hast glorified to hear thyself so named. But *I* name thee fool! fool! and again, thou fool!"

Hang-Aku regarded his captive with a slight cynical smile; then he made a gesture of dismissal. The two soldiers tightened their hold upon the arms of the prisoner and led him out. Under the necessity of keeping up with the long stride of his captors Amun-Ling stumbled pitifully, and once almost fell, catching his foot in the long chain that swung from his thin wrists.

The mandarin leant back in his chair with half-closed eyes, a faint smile still on his lips. He was the only tranquil figure in that great hall. His soldiers were now openly muttering; their faces were full of apprehension. A group of them had gathered around the window through which cries and shouts became every second more plainly audible. After a moment's discussion one of them approached the throne.

"Sire," he said in a thin voice, "we fear . . . dost thou not hear how the rebels . . ."

Without opening his eyes Hang-Aku responded:—

"Fellow, I do not hear the rebels. I listen for another sound."

And Miss Penberthy, her heart leaping in her breast, knew that she also was listening in sick horror for another sound.

It came: a thin wailing noise that sounded so close it might have issued from the adjacent hall. Higher and higher it rose till it was scarcely more than a thin whistle of sound. Then it ceased suddenly and there was silence for a moment. Hang-Aku turned his head slowly towards the archway, his mouth still set in that faint smile. Miss Penberthy found that she was trembling all over; she felt sick and her knees were shaking.

"I am dreaming," she told herself with a horrible sense of reality; "I am dreaming . . ."

There was a thick sound of choking, and then a faint monotonous voice uttering unintelligible words at a furious rate. The soldiers all stood stiff and silent now. The muttering voice grew louder, and suddenly broke into a shrill intense scream. Miss Penberthy put her hands to her ears.

Still the terrible screaming continued on a high sustained note; it was more like the thin metallic sound of a siren than the cry of any live creature.

"Oh, God!" moaned Miss Penberthy with the blood throbbing in her temples; "oh God! this is a dream, a dream!"

The long inhuman cry ended abruptly on the note upon which it had begun. There was no further sound. Miss Penberthy put cold hands to her forehead and found it covered with sweat. The mandarin's evil yellow face was still turned towards the archway as if in expectation; still it wore that faint curious smile. Hoarse shouting was very plainly audible now from beneath the great window: many voices were raised.

There was a cry from one of the men who stood by the window, and he turned a white face to his companions.

"They have gunpowder!" he said, hoarsely; "we shall all die like rats unless they be appeased!"

The others crowded about the window; all pretence of order or discipline was abandoned. Hang-Aku seemed not to notice; still he watched the archway from under half-closed lids.

And there came again the jingle of armour, and through that archway two soldiers returned walking with quick strides. No captive followed them. But blood streamed upon the black marble floor from a ghastly object that one of them carried in his hand. It was a dead man's head, roughly severed and terrible to see. He carried it before him, upside down, balanced in the palm of his huge hand, his hairy fingers spread over the smooth bald crown. The dead eyes were wide open.

Up to the foot of the throne they marched together and there halted, holding the ghastly dripping head towards the mandarin. His eyes gleamed, and he motioned to them to lay the thing down.

"Sire!" cried one of them, flinging himself upon the steps of the throne, "we are in danger! The multitude is strong! They must be appeased, or we are doomed! doomed!"

Hang-Aku raised his eyes from the contemplation of the bleeding head and glanced casually at the prostrate figure before him.

"What does the mob desire of me, fellow?"

"Sire, they ask that Amun-Ling be given back to them. Continually they call the name of Amun-Ling." The man glanced with a shudder at the pools of blood upon the dark steps. And indeed as he spoke a great cry arose:—

"Amun-Ling! give us Amun-Ling! Death to Hang-Aku!"

A smile flitted over the evil features of the mandarin and he regarded tranquilly the horrible object at his feet. Then he rose and descended slowly the four steps of his throne. With great deliberation he picked up the bleeding head and stood looking down at it as it lay in his hands.

"Amun-Ling!" shouted the crowd below; "give us Amun-Ling!" Hang-Aku strode towards the window. His terrified men-at-arms fell back from it as he approached. He stopped about two feet away and, lifting the blood-stained head, deliberately flung it through the open window among the people below.

"MURDERER, USURPER, TYRANT, THOU HAST BEEN CALLED. BUT I NAME THEE FOOL! FOOL! AND AGAIN, THOU FOOL!"

An absolute silence fell. The mandarin approached close to the window and stood there, looking out.

Then there arose a perfect howl of execration; screams of women mingled with hoarse cries of men. It was like the roaring of wild beasts in the jungle.

When Hang-Aku turned from the window he seemed to have lost his serenity. His face was grey and his big lips twitched.

"It is a great mob!" he muttered. "Perhaps it were better that all my men should be called out. Barricades must be put up."

He strode towards the archway. One of the men at the window exclaimed:—

"See, see! they are placing barrels of gunpowder along the walls! We are doomed! doomed!"

A perfect pandemonium arose All the soldiers shouted together with frantic gestures. Some leaned from the window and tried to get speech with the men below.

"Oh, God!" cried Miss Penberthy, appealing to a Deity she had never recognized; "oh, God, let this dream end!"

The great mandarin paused and strode back to the window, his face working. It was evident that even he knew fear now. But when he appeared at the window such howls and screams arose from the mob that he drew back again.

"Hang-Aku!" shouted the people below. "Give us Hang-Aku! Hang-Aku the thief! Hang-Aku the murderer!"

Hang-Aku pushed his way through the crowd and hastened to the door. One of his men hung from the window shouting to the leaders of the

crowd below. He turned with blazing eyes and cried out something to those standing behind him.

"Hang-Aku!" shouted the multitude.

"This is a dream!" said Miss Penberthy to herself, as before her fascinated eyes the frantic men-at-arms seized their lord by the shoulders; their faces were set and white.

The mandarin turned upon them, and then with a sudden realization of their purpose broke from them and tried to flee through the archway; his way was barred by three others. One of them caught him by the sleeve, but he flung off the grasping hand and ran wildly about the hall, cowering at last behind the great carved throne.

His men crowded around and dragged him out. Miss Penberthy could not see him for the mass of pushing, shouting men who surrounded him, but she could hear his uncanny, lisping voice raised in protest and pleading.

"This is a dream," she muttered to herself like one repeating a formula that has no meaning for him; "this is a dream; this is a dream."

With fascinated eyes she watched them drag the huge mandarin across the slippery floor towards the window. She saw them crowd around it and raise that massive body on their shoulders, heard the horrible voice raised in a lisping scream . . . Hang-Aku's long taper nails grasped and clawed at the heads of his men as they flung him through the window. A roar arose from the mob below.

"Oh!" screamed Miss Penberthy, "I am dreaming, dreaming, dreaming!" Her voice seemed to rise to a thin wail and a blackness fell upon her eyes.

When she opened them again the light was dim. She found herself staring stupidly at three rows of shining white discs, which her awakening senses gradually recognized as plates set out upon a painted kitchen dresser.

Her head ached terribly and her limbs seemed stiff as she rose slowly to her feet. As she stood up she felt a gust of cold wind upon her neck. She turned. The window was closed, but the night air streamed in from a jagged hole in one of the top panes; there was glass upon the floor and table.

Between the table and dresser squatted the headless figure of the china mandarin. There before Miss Penberthy's aching eyes was the great yellow-robed body with its placidly-clasped hands; but the once malignant head lay shattered to mere pieces of coloured china upon the floor. Near the dresser lay a small dark object. Miss Penberthy picked it up. It was a small heavy piece of dark metal of a rough oblong shape.

There was absolute silence but for the ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece; it was a quarter to nine.

A taxi whirred up the road, and from far away Miss Penberthy heard the tremulous note of a bugle.

PALLA FISHING.

By MAURICE H. NICHOLLS.

THE accompanying three photographs illustrate a curious method of fishing practised in India and known as "palla fishing." The first picture shows a native with his net on his shoulder and a chatty on his head, while in the second he is launching the chatty preparatory to starting on his trip. As will be seen from the third photograph, the fisherman lies on the chatty on his stomach, and paddles and steers with his legs. When he gets well out in the stream he pushes his net down in front of him with both hands, and, when any fish are caught, slips them into the chatty.

The German Mind in Medals.

By MAYO DUDLEY.

THE most interesting and significant medals issued during the war are German.

Here, indeed, we find striking sidelights upon the German character and the German attitude toward other nations. We see clearly the Teuton's hatred of England, his contempt for America, his serene belief in his own superiority to all other peoples, and his unquestioning reliance upon the strength and efficiency of his own right arm. We can get, as it were, a digest of the German viewpoint on the progress and results of the war by glancing briefly at a series of these medals, taken in chronological order—not of manufacture, but of the war incident or situation that they commemorate. It is worth noting that most of them are made of iron, that the designs are graphic but not at all artistic, and that the workmanship is rough.

The assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria is the subject of a medal which takes chronological precedence as ascribing the cause of the war. The face of this medal shows the Serbian assassin, roughly garbed,

1. SHOWING RUSSIA'S ALLEGED INSTIGATION OF THE TRAGEDY OF SERAJEVO.

with bomb in hand hidden behind him. Beside him is a road-sign, "Serajevo, June 28, 1914"—the place and date of the tragedy. "The spark of the world's conflagration" sets forth the significance of the murder in the Teutonic plea for the verdict of history. (1.)

Russia comes in for abuse and accusation on the other side of the medal. The Czar's envoy to the Serbian Court is boldly presented as the instigator of the crime—a charge for which, so far as we are aware, there is no evidence. He is represented as a big, bearded man in frock-coat handing a bag of money to an uncouth man, pistol in hand, with two companions. "Russian Ambassador von Hartwig receives the Serbian murderer," is the accompanying legend.

Next in historic sequence is a medal commemorating the beginning of war. On one side is a bust portrait of the Kaiser, helmeted, and the phrase to which he gave utterance, repeated in the news of the day: "I do not know parties now; I know only Germans." A bust of the Emperor Francis Joseph adorns the other side, with the inscription: "Truly united."

Germany, ever heedful of her man-power, encouraged marriages of soldiers called to the Front. There must be a new generation to fight for the Hohenzollerns, no matter what happened to this one. The war-bride medal

2. A GERMAN "WAR-BRIDE" MEDAL, INSCRIBED "WITH GOD FOR KAISER AND EMPIRE."

marks this early epoch. A woman's hand clasped in that of a soldier, a naked sword with cross-hilt between, and the word "war-bride," encircling the edge, is on the obverse. The reverse shows a shield, crested with spiked helmet. "With God for Kaiser and empire," says the inscription. (2.)

Another medal of similar significance is one struck in honour of the "war-child." Here an inverted spiked helmet is the cradle of a naked babe. "Born during the world war," reads the German text.

A Medal of Invective.

Belgium had been violated by German arms, and French forces had met the invaders. The Germans charged the French with using dum-dum bullets. Mr. Gerard, the American Ambassador at Berlin, deals with this accusation, and describes bullets exhibited in proof. He believes that they had been punctured for range use, so that, if the target were missed, the bullets would not wreak unintended damage far beyond.

But the German medal makes the charge positively and threatens reprisal.

The medallist sets up a number of cartridges and labels them "dum-dum." He makes the symbolic French cock strut off in apparent

3. SHOWING DUM-DUM BULLETS SAID TO HAVE BEEN USED BY THE FRENCH.

glee, and sarcastically adds the inscription: "All respect to the *grande nation!*" He becomes melodramatic when he engraves the other side. Here is a field of dead, with a feminine figure wearing the liberty cap, personification of France, sowing dum-dum bullets. "Thou sowest vengeance in due time," is the inscribed threat of a future day of frightfulness. (3.)

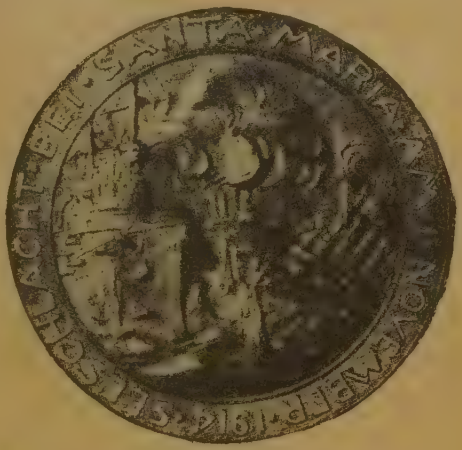
When the Teuton forces succeeded in forcing back the French on the Lorraine frontier, they made a medal for that exploit. "Rupprecht, Crown Prince of Bavaria," in command, has

4. IN HONOUR OF CROWN PRINCE RUPPRECHT OF BAVARIA. REVERSE, THE BAVARIAN LION.

his portrait, name, and rank on the obverse as the man of the hour. The Bavarian lion fighting off a much-bedraggled French cock is on the other side, on which is inscribed: "Battle in Lorraine," and, on a shield: "Victory at Dieuze, August 20, 1914." (4.)

5. IN HONOUR OF HINDENBURG. REVERSE, THE BATTLE OF THE MASURIAN LAKES.

The scene shifts to East Prussia, where the Russian invading army under Samsonoff met a severe defeat, August 28th to 31st, 1914. The portrait, with name and rank, of Major-General von Hindenburg, distinguishes that fighting veteran, since become chief of staff, as the German leader who turned the tide. On the reverse of the medal are shown mounted Cossacks in flight, horses and men struggling, swimming, immersed in an expanse of water labelled: "In the Masurian Lakes." The inscription triumphantly tells the story: "The Russian Army of the Narew destroyed." (5.)



6. COMMEMORATING THE NAVAL ACTION OFF SANTA MARIA.

Some German Naval Medals.

Next Vice-Admiral Count von Spee is given credit for victory in the naval battle of Santa Maria, November 1st, 1914—known to the British as that of Coronel. On the face of the medal are his portrait, name, and rank. The other side shows cruisers with guns firing, and a British ship sinking. The title is, "Sea-fight at Santa Maria," and the date is given. (6.) There does not seem to be any medal commemorating the destruction of Spee's squadron by Admiral Sturdee, off the Falkland Islands, just five weeks later.

Another new year has come and gone, but not less is the kindly Teuton's hatred of England. The portrait bust on one medal shows the long whiskers and benevolent face of High Admiral von Tirpitz, the father of relentless submarine warfare. The reverse commandeers a classic divinity, Neptune, as Germany's ally against the British. The sea-god, his back turned, is seated on a U-boat, his left hand grasping his trident, his right fist clenched, to be shaken at a fleet of vessels flying the British naval flag. The sweet and gentle prayer, "*Gott Strafe England,*" is familiar. "February 18, 1915," is the date given—that on which the unrestricted submarine warfare

7. IN HONOUR OF ADMIRAL VON TIRPITZ. REVERSE, "GOTT STRAFE ENGLAND."

which Germany thought would bring England to her knees was first declared. (7.)

"Tirpitz, high admiral," is the name and title, with portrait, that ornaments the face of another medal struck in honour of U-boat frightfulness. "The sinking of every vessel by Germany is a death-bolt in the heart of England," the legend boasts. The other side displays a sinking ship, deserted by enormous rats, with men in a small boat; from the conning-tower of a submarine German sailors are throwing these castaways a line. "Watch-word—sink the ship but save the people" is the accompanying legend; though when the Germans adopted any

8. AN IMAGINATIVE MEDAL SHOWING A SUBMARINE RESCUING MEN FROM A TORPEDOED SHIP.

such policy of mercy is not recorded. Recent statistics show that as a matter of fact more than fifteen thousand civilians—men, women, and children—have been left to drown by the tender-hearted pirates of the U-boats. (8.)

Germany's Compliments to Japan.

At this time Germany felt no love for Japan, which had taken over the Pacific colonies of the Fatherland as fast as their garrisons saw reason in the persuasion of force. One medal shows Tommy Atkins boosting a monkey, labelled "Japan," up a tree, in the branches whereof reposes a magnificent specimen of the German eagle.

The "yellow peril" is characterized in still another medal, struck in anger for the loss of Kiau-Chau, the colony that Germany wrested from the Chinese when that ancient people's multiplied troubles made them poor protectors of their own. While the dragon is typical of China, it seems to be used here to typify Japan, or perhaps the entire yellow race. The face of the medal shows such a dragon with all Oriental characteristics coming up out of the sea to be attacked by an armed soldier of Germany. "Germany's watch" is the inscription.

The grinning faces of two yellow men adorn the upper half of the reverse. These heads are between the words, "To Japan," a dedication. The rhyming legend reads: "Your true face does not surprise us; he who is hired, he who is

9. EXPRESSING THE GERMAN HATRED OF THE ORIENTAL RACES.

bent upon booty, remains, instead of yellow, blue with boils in German Kiau-Chau." This is somewhat obscure, but may be interpreted as an invocation of the bubonic plague as the avenger of the German losses. (9.)

Some "Lusitania" Medals.

The merciless submarine warfare became of full effect. The ocean liner *Lusitania*, with

10. SHOWING DEATH SELLING TICKETS FOR THE "LUSITANIA."

appalling loss of innocent life, was sunk on May 7th, 1915. Probably the most famous of all German medals is that designed by Karl

Goetz and bearing the curiously anachronistic date, "May 5, 1915"—two days before the shocking event actually happened.

In this medal the giant ship is shown sinking, her stern only out of the water. "No contraband" is to be read above, evidently sarcasm directed at declarations that the ship was unarmed and carried no forbidden cargo. The inscription reads: "The great liner *Lusitania* sunk by a German submarine, May 5, 1915." On the reverse, Death is selling tickets at a window marked "Cunard Line" to a long line of eager passengers. "Business before everything" reads the legend. (10.)

Another *Lusitania* medal rejoices over the same lamentable event, but was manufactured later, in 1916, as the year opposite the name of the artist, Wilhelm H. Eberbach, testifies. Eberbach runs to skeletons in his designs, and he has not avoided the practice in this

11. A "LUSITANIA" MEDAL, INSCRIBED "TO WOODROW WILSON, DISREGARDER OF WARNINGS."

instance. Death is astride the sinking ship, and the inscription reads: "Surprised though warned against hazard aboard the *Lusitania*." Turning over the medal, we find a dedication to President Wilson, and read: "To the disregarder of warnings, Woodrow Wilson, 1916." (11.)

Offensive as this is, it is less so than several other medals which make the President of the United States, Uncle Sam, or the American people the butt of ribaldry.

Germany's Military Successes.

The German occupation of Warsaw is commemorated in a medal that gives credit for the campaign in Russian Poland to "Leopold of Bavaria, general field-marshal." This designation and the portrait of Prince Leopold ornament the face. The lion of Bavaria, roaring, as he mounts a stone platform, is on the reverse; also a mermaid is shown on a miniature shield, with the date, "August 5, 1915," about it. "To the conqueror of Warsaw" is the dedication. (12.)

12. IN HONOUR OF PRINCE LEOPOLD OF BAVARIA. REVERSE, THE BAVARIAN LION.

13. IN HONOUR OF FIELD-MARSHAL MACKENSEN'S RECONQUEST OF GALICIA.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen is exalted in another medal as the hero of the campaign in Galicia. His portrait, name, and title are on the obverse, while on the other side are stalks of ripe wheat, a sickle, and a knout or Russian whip,

14. COMMEMORATING THE CAPTURE OF BREST-LITOVSK.

signifying that the grain is to be harvested in Galicia by Teutons, and that the Russ will no longer tyrannize over the inhabitants of that province. "End of Russian rule in Galicia" is inscribed. (13.)

The German advance continues, and Mackensen has taken the Russian city of Brest-Litovsk — since then the scene of peace parleys. The conquering hero is

15. COMMEMORATING ZEPPELIN RAIDS ON LONDON.

shown, with his name, and that of the artist, Elie, in smaller type, on the face of the medal celebrating his success. On the other side is a German infantryman, gun at ease, regarding burning houses. "Brest-Litovsk, 1915," is the title. (14.)

The Zeppelins had now begun the murderous work of air-raids on London. To commemorate these attacks, fatal chiefly to women and children, a medal presents the portrait of Count Zeppelin on the obverse, with his name. On the other side is the Tower Bridge, with two big dirigibles hovering over it. The inscription records: "Air attacks on London," with the dates, August 17th and 18th, 1915. (15.)

The face of hatred takes colour of blame in a medal the obverse of which displays the portraits of the three rulers, William of Germany, Mohammed of Turkey, and the late Francis Joseph of Austria. These effigies take the upper half of the plaque, with the legend, above and between in Latin: "*Soli Deo Gloria*"—"The glory to God alone." The scene below is a field conference of officers of the three allied champions of *kultur*.

A German, a Turk, and an Austrian infantryman take up the centre of the reverse, with the motto: "Brothers in arms." Around the edge there runs, in German text: "England would starve us; Russia plunder and rob; France would singe and burn us; Italy would avenge dismembered Belgium." (16.)

The Balkan situation in the earlier period of the war is pictured in a medal with three crowned heads, labelled "Ferdinand" (Bulgaria), "Constantine" (Greece), "Ferdinand" (Roumania), behind bars. Beneath is a mailed

17. SHOWING THREE BALKAN PRINCES AS VICTIMS OF THE ALLIES.

fist, coin, and dragon, with the appeal: "Help the Balkans." The apparent meaning is that the Allies were coercing the Balkan princes by combined violence and bribery. On the reverse the same three Royalties are making supplication, two on both knees and the other half-kneeling. "The pilgrimage in the Balkans" is the idiomatic inscription. (17.)

Samples of German Sarcasm.

The Gallipoli expedition is made much of by the German medallists. In one medal two

16. THE HEADS OF THE EMPERORS OF GERMANY, AUSTRIA, AND TURKEY; BELOW, A CONFERENCE OF THEIR OFFICERS. REVERSE, A GERMAN, A TURK, AND AN AUSTRIAN SOLDIER, WITH ABUSIVE INSCRIPTIONS

18. RIDICULING THE ANGLO-FRENCH DARDANELLES EXPEDITION.

skeletons in the sea washing on a shore defended by entanglements are suggestive of what happened to this ill-fated enterprise, as medallized. Star and crescent, in the sky, are between the years "1915" and "1916." A lanky Scot in kilts, on the reverse, holds a boat in his arms; beside him a diminutive infantryman, on one knee, has his gun aimed. "Moon-seeking at Gallipoli" reads the sarcastic legend. (18.)

Lord Grey of Falloden—better known as Sir Edward Grey—is caricatured in a medal that hinges upon conditions in Egypt in 1915, when there was much talk of unrest in the land of the pyramids, and the Turks were threatening the

19. SHOWING "SIR GREY" AND THE AWAKENING OF EGYPT.

Suez Canal. "Sir Grey" is shown with fear-stricken face, and with a grinning skeleton, holding an hour-glass, hanging over his shoulder. "Sir Grey, show your power," he is invoked. On the other side the Sphinx is rising from the desert sands; we see cross and crescent in the sky, and an armed force on camels. "Egypt awakens," says the inscription. (19.)

German caricature does not spare King Nicholas of Montenegro in the hour of his greatest grief. His country had been overwhelmed and himself forced to seek safety in flight. His portrait is labelled "Nikita," with a bird on the wing beneath, and the inscription:

20. PORTRAYING NICHOLAS OF MONTENEGRO AS A RAVEN

"First flight of the dove of peace." A sword partly drawn from its sheath and, below, a flying raven are on the other side of the medal. The text reads: "The raven driven from his country." (20.)

The German medallist also pokes fun at the Italian Commander-in-Chief, General Cadorna, portraying him as seeking the shelter of an umbrella or sunshade. "Sisyphus on the Isonzo, 1915–1916" says the classical allusion on the reverse; the legendary Sisyphus is represented as vainly struggling to force the rock uphill,

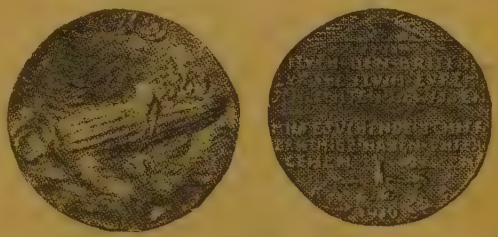
21. SARCASTICALLY PORTRAYING GENERAL CADORNA AND HIS UMBRELLA.

typifying the Italian efforts to drive the Austrians from their mountain frontier. (21.)

"Curse the British on the Sea!"

On February 2nd, 1916, occurred the incident when a crippled Zeppelin fell into the sea and a British trawler manned by nine unarmed men declined to take off the twenty-eight or thirty armed Germans on the shipwrecked aircraft. This abandonment was criminal conduct, according to the German medallist. He pictures the big dirigible sinking; the crew, gathered on the stern, signalling a small vessel in the distance. Above is the designation of the aircraft, L-19.

"Curse the British on the sea; curse their



22. CURSING THE BRITISH FOR FAILING TO RESCUE A ZEPPELIN CREW.

bad conscience!" is the kindly prayer inscribed on the reverse. Here are presented the scales of justice, and the annotation: "Men wrecked at sea, asking rescue, forced to perish," and the date. (22.)

The same incident and the alleged mistreatment of men from a German submarine, the U-22, are the subject of another medal, which bears the name of Eberbach as its designer. Here Eberbach gives us another skeleton. We see Death, with his back turned, gazing over

23. INSCRIBED, "ENGLAND, THE MEASURE IS FULL."

the depths at a sinking ship—whose crew, presumably, is perishing without any British effort to rescue them. The reverse bears the German Admiralty flag and a Latin hexameter: "*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor*"—"May some avenger arise from our bones!" (23.)

It was to be expected that the Irishman, Sir Roger Casement, would be exalted as a martyr. The medal commemorating his execution shows the head and nude torso of Casement with his arms shackled, being throttled by a grotesque figure of a Scot. There is his name, and also:

24. PORTRAYING THE EXECUTION OF SIR ROGER CASEMENT.

"England's ambition." "English Law of 1351" is the title of a book enmeshed in cobwebs shown on the other side of the medal. Beside it are iron stocks and a death's-head with serpents. "Edward III.'s dead hand places the garotte about Ireland," reads the text. (24.)

Mr. Asquith, as former British Premier, takes his turn as a target of attack. "British respect for treaties" is represented by a British bulldog tearing a document with his teeth; though just what treaty the Asquith Government violated is not specified. The reverse of the medal carries the British motto of the Order of the Garter, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*," and the dedication: "To the honourable Mr. Asquith." (25.)

25. SHOWING THE BRITISH BULLDOG TEARING UP A TREATY.

Admiral Scheer appears on the obverse of a medal commemorating the naval fight in the North Sea, where both British and Germans claimed victory. The reverse shows a nude male figure waving the flag of Prussia in one hand, while the other holds aloft a laurel-wreath. "Not by accident but by efficiency" appears above; and beneath, "Skaggerack, June 1, 1916." (26.)

26. IN HONOUR OF ADMIRAL SCHEER, COMMANDER IN THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND.

Portraits of the four monarchs of the Teutonic alliance—Ferdinand of Bulgaria, William of Germany, the late Francis Joseph of Austria, and Mohammed of Turkey—decorate the face of a medal dedicated to their pact. "With united powers" is the motto. On the other side of the medal are shown four infantrymen, one of each nation, armed, in postures of offence, and the years, "1914–1916." (27.)

27. SHOWING THE FOUR SOVEREIGNS OF THE TEUTONIC ALLIANCE.

The Dream of World Conquest.

"*Deutschland über Alles*" is the sentiment of a medal of more classic design. On the obverse is a naked gladiator with a bull by the horns, overthrowing it. The reverse shows Atlas bearing the world. The verses of the German poet, Ernst Moritz Arndt, are inscribed, beginning on the obverse and ending on the reverse: "He who desires staunchly, and his desires do not change, will pry the firmament out of its fastness in the sky; all spirits must bow to him, and will call: 'Come and take me; you only take your own.'"

What use is it to talk conciliation with a people who hold such ideas, and who express them with such nonsensical "swank"?

Monsieur Félicité *and* Miriel

By HUGH WALPOLE.

Illustrated by C. E. Brock, R.I.

I.

VILLETON, that ancient town in the South of France, has three things about which it may boast—its Cathedral, its pastry, and M. Félicité—and of these three the greatest is M. Félicité. The Cathedral is built up of dreams, the pastry of sugar, but M. Félicité of solid reality. He has been dead now a dozen years, but the memory of him keeps the town together, gives it a quality that holds it apart from other French towns, mellows its harshness, sweetens its acidity, fills its air with a delicate romance.

The painting of him in the *salle* of the Soleil Rouge conveys an idea of him as he was when he walked every morning as punctually as any clock up the steep Rue des Ecoliers, at a quarter to ten, to buy his morning paper and to listen to the news from M. the Barber.

In the picture he wears a faded brown tail-coat, brown baggy velveteen trousers, and a brown bow over his white frilled shirt. The face is lighted with big brown twinkling eyes and his white hair is curly and cut close to the head. This is the only picture of him in Villeton, but there is no need of a picture to keep him fresh in the people's hearts—he is there for all time.

He is, perhaps, the only human being about whom no one ever said a grudging word. Even Sir Galahad must have been thought a prig by some humanists and many of the Saints must have been tiresome company, but Bonaparte Félicité was brave, witty, honest, pure and simple as a child, affectionate, humble, beloved even by M. Raguilleau, the notary, the bitterest man in Villeton.

There are so many stories to tell about him that it is difficult, indeed, to make a choice; but the one about the Comtesse de Bric and Mlle. Miriel shows several sides of his character at once, and I know that it is true because I was in Villeton myself at the time and heard the greater part of it from M. André's lips, and M. André was M. Félicité's best friend. I myself regard it as the bravest thing that M. Félicité ever did, and would face any number of lions or tigers or serpents (I have an especial horror of serpents) rather than the Comtesse de Bric in a tantrum, but then I am easily hurt by sharp words and prefer torture to irony. The old lady has been dead now a number of years, but she is remembered well enough as she used to drive every sunny afternoon through the Place in an old green cabriolet with Jerome, her coachman, fat and pompous on the box, and plumes in her bonnet of a light red colour and her sharp yellow nose sticking out in front of her, sharp as a knife.

She was not popular in Villeton, but she was respected, for she had suffered great tragedies in her day and suffered them nobly, and now she was quite alone in a great barrack of a house, alone, that is, except for her niece Miriel. How gloomy it must have been for that poor girl anyone could see with half a glance.

And yet, with it all, Miriel seemed to be always in the happiest spirits. She was slight of figure, with a round laughing face, and was redeemed from a plain appearance by brown eyes that were always dancing, a mouth that was always smiling, and a laugh that would win the fidelity of an ogre.

Her tenderness and sympathy were as beautiful as her happiness, and there were few people in Villeton who had not experienced her goodness at one time or another. Of course, the young men of the town were in love with her, and equally of course she was guarded from them with a vigilance and severity that never, save on one occasion only, was relaxed. There were Jerome Constin, Maurice Reval, Jacques Poisson, Jean Grenoble, and a host of others, and there was—some while after the others—Jean Marteau. Jean Marteau was our poet—our poet then—Paris's poet afterwards—the world's poet now—and who is there in Europe who has not read "Les Souliers" and "L'Après-Midi d'une Cabriolet"? Let me see him and I will tell him what I think of him. Marteau was beautiful to look upon, with golden hair, blue eyes, and the expression of the angel Gabriel—always as

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though, in the expression of his eyes, he had been born yesterday and hadn't the beginning of an idea of the wickedness of this evil world. He came of a good honest stock—his father had been wealthy once and then lost his money owing to foolish speculations and died of the shock of it—and now Mme. Marteau lived with her beautiful Jean in a little green-shuttered house just outside the town, and he wrote poems to the snowdrops that clustered in the wood behind their little garden and to the brown shaggy hills that rose in front of their gate.

I cannot discover when was the first occasion that Jean Marteau and Miriel met, but it must have been a very distant and contracted kind of meeting, for the old Comtesse watched her niece like a dragon, and always sent wizened yellow Mme. Perrault as a bodyguard if she herself were forced to stay at home. The old woman hated all the townspeople of Villeton save only M. Félicité, but for him she had rather a weakness, and she would invite him up to drink coffee with her in the little dark music-room at the château, and he has often described to me how dreary those evenings were when she sat in her high-backed chair, looking like a witch with her white hair and leaning on her ebony walking stick with a red and green parrot swinging on its perch behind her head. Miriel was at first forbidden to be present on those occasions, for even M. Félicité, turned fifty and long resigned to the happy state of a bachelor, was considered dangerous. Dangerous, at least, for a time—and then I suppose M. Félicité's mellow kindness, his fatherly attitude to the world in general, his sense of the fitness of things, and his smiling compliments to the Comtesse herself, reassured the old lady; Miriel was at last allowed to come in and pour out his coffee and listen demurely to his pleasant conversation. She came again and again and again. He came to the château more often than before. The Comtesse thought it was because he valued her acquaintance and liked to be seen walking through the old black gates and to be spoken about, in the town, as a friend of High Company—but dear Félicité was far too simply natural a soul for that. He came because he loved Miriel as a father loves an only daughter, and she, in return, loved him. This affection between the two of them sprang up very swiftly. Félicité always felt as though the life of that bright creature in that dark old house was too harsh to be borne, and I think that he had from the very beginning some kind of hope that he would effect her release.

It was, however, after Miriel had returned from a month's visit to an aunt in Toulouse that a new note crept into their friendship. M. Félicité himself was at a loss to explain this change that he noticed in his young friend. Miriel seemed to be shy of him and at the same time to be anxious to take him into her confidence. As, however, he never saw her alone (there was always present Madame la Comtesse and her parrot or old spitfire dry-as-a-biscuit Mme. Perrault), he could never discover her trouble. It worried him, it perplexed him.

Once she was about to speak to him. They were alone for a moment; her eyes flamed, her cheek flushed, her hands were raised imploringly towards him. Then on the marble floor outside them was the tap-tap of the ebony cane, and the moment was lost.

One late stormy afternoon M. Félicité was sitting over his fire reading that fine play by M. Victor Hugo, "Les Burgraves." It was an afternoon of the utmost fury; the rain lashed the window-panes until they screamed in protest, the square below the window was jumping and leaping with the little hissing puddles, and even the great front of the Cathedral itself seemed to shrink away from such a raging tempest. No one was about in the world. M. Félicité's fire burnt a golden red, his lacquer cabinet gleamed in the light, and the sonorous eloquence of "Les Burgraves" thrilled the dear man's gentle heart.

Suddenly there was a frantic knocking on the door. Down the dark stairs he went, a candle in his hand, unlatched the heavy door, rolled it back, and beheld a terrible sight.

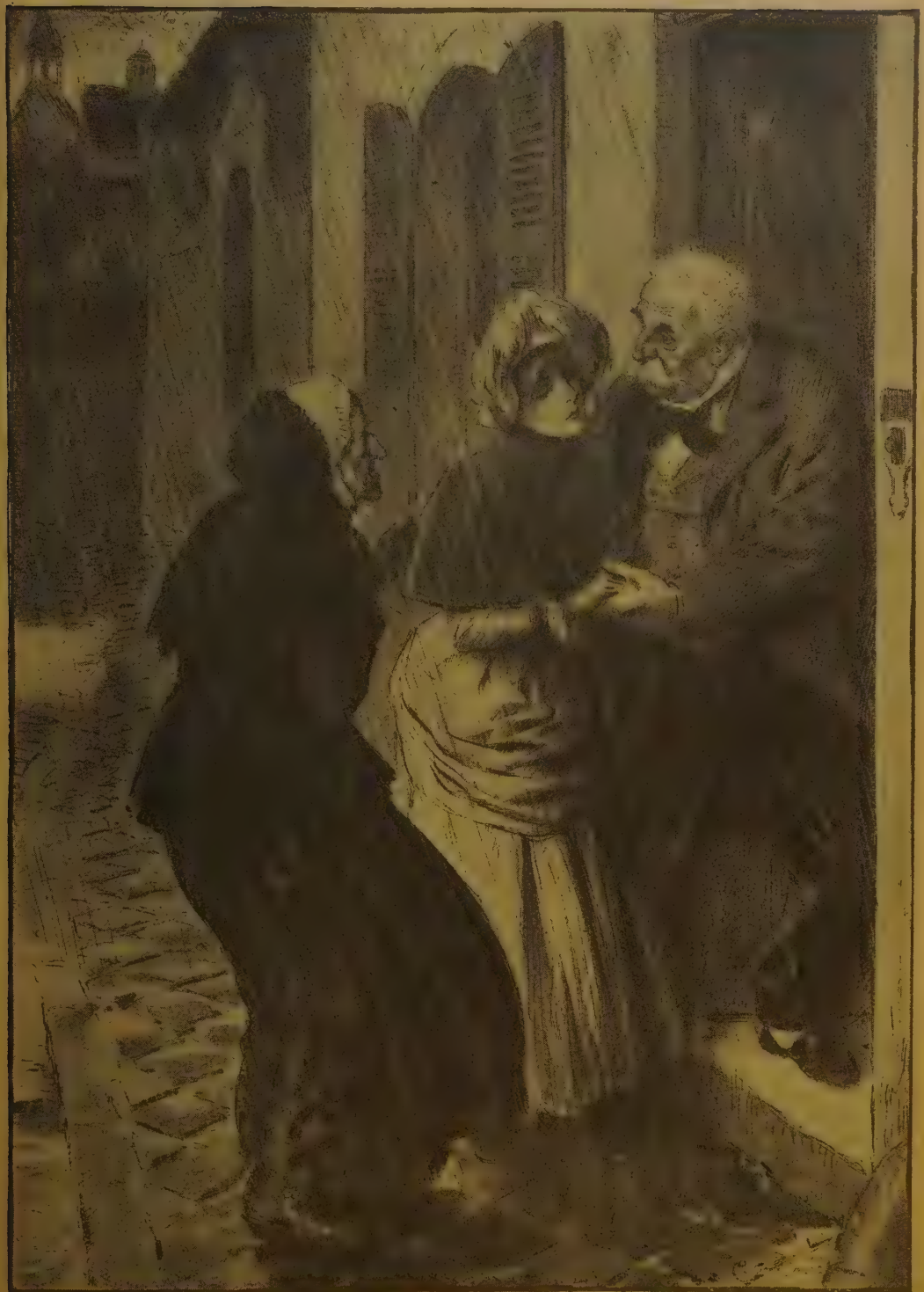
There, in the rain and storm, was a battered and sodden Mme. Perrault and there, leaning against the wall, with a white face and soaking clothes, was a shaking figure of a girl, Miriel. Into the house he dragged her without asking a question, hurried Mme. Bette, his housekeeper, for warm things, ordered coffee and every kind of eatable that the house contained, and listened, between his labours, to Mme. Perrault's hysterical explanations. It had been fine early in the afternoon, so fine that they had dismissed the carriage. They had been walking down the Rue des Ecoliers, the rain had caught them, they had sought shelter in a doorway, it had seemed to clear, they had ventured out again, and it had been worse than ever. Buffeted, soaked, hysterical, they had found M. Félicité's door! What joy! What mercy! But now at once they must have a carriage! Now, immediately! Many people would have laughed at the absurd picture that Mme. Perrault presented with her thin cheeks flushed, her skirts muddy and bedraggled, rain-drops dripping from her nose; but M. Félicité was of too courteous a tradition.

"First," he said, "you must change—and some hot coffee." Mlle. Miriel had been led away some minutes before by Mme. Bette. Mme. Perrault shrilly insisted on immediate departure, then shivered, sneezed, and finally looked round upon the glowing comforts of the room with a longing eye.

"You must change, Madame, and wait whilst your things dry by the fire. Mme. Bette——"

Miriel, a glowing figure, with the housekeeper's ample garments gathered closely about her, interrupted him. Mme. Perrault flung one glance at the little pool of water that had dripped from her skirts on to M. Félicité's beautiful brown carpet, and then, in her turn, retired.

M. Félicité with hands outstretched came forward and Miriel flung her arms about his neck and kissed him—then, still with her head on his



"THERE, IN THE RAIN AND THE STORM, WAS A BATTERED AND SODDEN MME. PERRAULT AND A SHAKING FIGURE OF A GIRL."

shoulders and he stroking her hair, she began hurriedly :—

"Quick! Quick! There is not a moment. The old thing will be back in an instant. It is the first time that I have had an opportunity all these weeks. See! See! You must help me, you and only you in all the wide world!"

M. Félicité was bewildered: "But I, child, what can I do?"

"I am married to Jean Marteau. Yes, do not scream! It is so, and I glory in it! But there is not a moment—it happened in Toulouse. He, too, was there. We have loved one another for two years——"

"*Dieu!*" cried M. Félicité. "*Pauvre—— !*"

But she hurried on: "Yes, well—see. He is at Bois de l'Eau now—waiting—and my aunt watches me like a cat and I must get to him——"

"But——"

"No—wait an instant. Only you can help me. You must ask me to tea—on the day that I come to Mme. Patisserie for the piano—every Thursday. I will manage it—to come alone, I mean—and you must have a carriage and you must drive me to Bois de l'Eau—and afterwards you must return and inform my aunt——"

"But——" said poor M. Félicité again.

"Yes, it must be so. Only with you shall I be allowed to come to tea. I cannot run away—at once I should be seen and brought back. And only you can tell my aunt, only you in the wide world. Only you have the courage sufficient, and she cares for you——"

"But——" said M. Félicité yet again.

"Hark! I hear the cat coming. Ah! But you must. You love me—I know it. This is my life—I shall kill myself if I cannot get to him, and you would not have that. Next Thursday—four o'clock."

Mme. Perrault was upon them, looking truly wonderful in an enormous green dress of Mme. Bette's, from which her scraggy head stuck out like a chicken out of a hedge.

When the sun shone again and the ladies departed for the château they left as may be imagined a strangely bewildered gentleman behind them. No good now "Les Burgraves" of M. Victor Hugo—of no value that faint blue evening sky, glowing so gently above the glittering cobbles of the market-place. M. Félicité had enough to trouble his mind for a long time to come.

He saw her as she had stood with her arms about his neck, her cheeks flushing, her eyes shining and dancing, the great yellow skirt looped up about her. He felt still the warm touch of her fingers on his neck, he heard her voice pleading——

The tears filled his eyes, and he sat in front of his fire for many hours and would not touch the beautiful supper that Mme. Bette had prepared for him.

She was married—there was the crux of the matter. Nothing to be done now but to make the best of it. He was a courageous and bold-spirited man, but even he shuddered at the thought of the anger of the old woman with the ebony cane. But what was he to do? *What* was he to do? Throughout the night the Cathedral clock struck the quarters; M. Félicité, tossing on his bed, heard them all and could come to no decision. To tell the Comtesse at once would help matters not at all—the mere idea of Miriel in her power, a ready victim for her rage, was terrible. Moreover, that would be betraying his trust. To go to Jean Marteau would be of no service—too late now to plead—the evil was done. Moreover, was it so great an evil? Young Marteau was a fine fellow and would one day make a great name—moreover, he was a good fellow—decent, honourable, a man—and was not this alone an escape for his Miriel? Was it not better for her to be wedded to handsome young Marteau out there, in the woods, at Bois de l'Eau, rather than to drag on an unhappy existence in that dark, musty château?

Surely better—surely better. And somewhere in the man's heart the love that he had for all the world stirred and saluted the coming of the grey trembling dawn.

II.

He was resolved. It should be his adventure. He had not come to this decision, it may readily be believed, without a thousand misgivings, but whatever way he might turn there seemed to be no other outlet for them all. He tried to fling his mind forward to the day when the Comtesse should be mollified and the young couple happily at peace with the world, but that day seemed distant indeed—always his mind hesitated at the picture of the old lady storming, as few old ladies had ever stormed in all the world's history. It would indeed be a *mauvais quart d'heure*.

Thursday arrived and with it, at about a quarter-past four, just such another fierce and sudden storm as the one that had taken the ladies by surprise the week before. It was fortunate that it had not begun earlier in the afternoon, for then, most assuredly, Miriel would never have been allowed to go to her music-lesson, but by the time that the first rain-drops fell she was safe in Mme. Patisserie's house. Sharp, as the half-hour struck in the Cathedral, she came tripping across the street under a huge umbrella carried by Mme. Patisserie's maid, Marie, and soon she was standing on the rose-buds in M. Félicité's carpet with her eyes shining, looking quite adorable in a peacock-blue dress and one of those Princess bonnets that girls looked so charming in somewhere about the 'eighties.

"Now——" she said, triumphantly facing her friend with the white curly hair and the brown tail-coat.

"Now——" said M. Félicité, trying to laugh back at her, but nevertheless embarrassed, he knew not why.

It seemed to him suddenly that he was losing Miriel, within the next half-hour, for good and all—this dear, happy child who had been so much in his life these last years—and he saw, perhaps, beyond the actual losing of her that it

"AS M. FÉLICITÉ HELD HER HE KNEW SUDDENLY THAT HE WOULD GIVE ANY JOY, AND TREASURE, TO HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT FOR HIS VERY, VERY OWN TO KEEP AND GUARD."

was the stern fate of old bachelors they must always lose everybody, and that, in the end, there would be no one to care whether they died or no, and, for a moment perhaps, the colour seemed to die out of the bowl of roses by the window, out of the lacquer cabinet, out of the blazing fire.

Then he was his cheerful self again. When Mme. Bette, with her eyebrows raised a little as she always had when something was going on about which she had not been informed, announced that the carriage was at the door, he caught Miriel to him and said, holding her off from him a little :—

"You love him ?"

"With all my heart and soul," she answered, gazing straight back into his eyes, and then she added with a strange little catch in her voice : "And you too—oh, you dear, and you too !"

The drive that followed will be readily imagined by all those who have witnessed a storm in Villeton, who remember what the old Villeton carriages were like some thirty years ago, who have invention enough to picture what the old road to Bois de l'Eau might have been after a flood of rain. The inside of the carriage was of a faded red plush, with holes where the moths had got at it, and a scent floated about their heads that had in it something of hay and chickens and garlic and tobacco. The conveyance was not very large and the coachman was nearly blind, quite deaf, and he had been chosen especially by M. Félicité because it seemed that there would be but little danger of his spreading the news on his return. The horses decided to behave as they pleased, and so away out of the town the carriage rattled through the rain and the mud and the fading light. No word could be spoken by those inside the conveyance. From seat to seat they were tossed, now forwards, now backwards ; now the carriage seemed to dive right down as though the mud had caught so solid a hold that it would never let go again, and then with a great wrench up it came and danced towards the stars. The only thing to be done was for M. Félicité to hold Miriel as tightly as he could, and this he did, and her soft cheek was pressed against his old brown one and her hair was about his eyes. As he held her th n he knew suddenly that he would give any joy, and treasure, to have something like that for his very, very own to keep and guard. Only as a husband, only as a father, could one reach the value of life, and he had been neither—this giving of Miriel into other hands seemed to snap, for him, his last links with life. In between the jerks he spoke to her : "You know what you are doing, my child ? You have thought it all over well and with a quiet spirit ? He is a good boy, your Jean, but marriage—it cannot always be

roses, you will not always have everything done for you as at the château, there will be others to think about—— Life demands courage, I know that well——"

She whispered in his ear that she was prepared.

"Yes, you are a brave girl and he is a brave boy. And I am there if you want me. I may seem an old, useless man—but never forget, my dear, that an old gentleman of sixty may have as young and cheerful a heart as any young man of twenty."

The horses seemed now to have exhausted their fury and the storm suddenly fell, the grey clouds broke like paper and gave place to a faint and trembling blue, and somewhere between the tops of the pine-trees two stars were hanging. They were climbing now, very slowly, the steep pine-strewn road that leads to Bois de l'Eau. Here in a clearing of the forest, looking through the trees out over Villeton and a purple country, stands the village. Now, after the storm, everything was clean and scented. The road shone with rain and the red roofs of the houses caught the evening light. There was a great peace about everything.

She clung to him and told him that he would always be everything to herself and to "Jean"—but even as she spoke her eyes were searching for her lover, her ears straining for his voice. At the door of the little inn he left her, and at the actual moment of his going she seemed to realize what he had been to her, and she clung to him and begged him to let her know at once how he fared with her aunt and kissed him again and again. Then he let her go, gave the old coachman the order to drive back to the château, and so started on the bravest deed of his life.

III.

It was quite dark when the château was reached and the black gates stood out, fierce and threatening, against the night sky. There was a cold wind blowing and making a sad little noise amongst the trees, and the coachman's teeth were chattering. As M. Félicité paid and dismissed him he was conscious that his own knees were trembling in a most unfortunate manner, and he walked up the dark melancholy avenue with a stronger desire for his own pleasant sitting-room and the kind heart of Mme. Bette than he had ever known in his life before. The great bell of the château clanged like a remorseful man's conscience when he pulled it, and he was ushered into the old music-room through the passages of a house that seemed peopled with ghosts.

The old servant, who had a face like a nut-cracker and faded velvet breeches, said: "I will tell Madame la Comtesse," and left M. Félicité to a troop of fears and misgivings. The music-room was always dim and dusty, but to-night the silver candlesticks over the fire-place burned but badly and the wind outside the windows made a most melancholy sighing.

M. Félicité stood in the middle of the floor, too nervous to take off his coat or to sit down, wishing that when the door opened it might disclose a whole troop of the most virulent Prussians rather than the aged hostess of the château.

When the door did open it displayed Madame la Comtesse already, as fate would have it, in one of her worst tempers.

Seen dimly in the candle-light, leaning on her ebony cane, with her grey silk dress and her white hair forming a kind of mist about her sharp nose and chin and gleaming eyes, she formed no gentle picture.

"Well, Monsieur," she said, "this is a late hour to bring back my niece. We have been anxious about her——" And then suddenly looking round the room—"and where is she?"

"She is at present," said M. Félicité, staring straight at those fierce eyes, "under the care of her husband, M. Jean Marteau, in the inn at Bois de l'Eau."

There was a pause that seemed to M. Félicité like a thousand hours. He heard all the clocks in the château ticking at once. He saw her straighten herself on her cane—then she gave a dry, hard little laugh.

"Would Monsieur do me the honour to tell me why it is that he considers this an occasion for idle jesting?"

"It is no jest," M. Félicité answered, steadily. "Mlle. Miriel was married to M. Jean Marteau two months ago at Toulouse. She came and told me this. She dared not face your very natural anger. I assured her that I would inform you, and I conducted her myself to Bois de l'Eau this afternoon. It seemed to me the best thing to do."

The old lady looked at him and then, very slowly, without taking her eyes from his face, her cane tapping the floor as she advanced, she came towards him until at last she almost touched him. He did not move from his place. Her eyes glowed like burning coals.

Then she began, very slowly, to speak and to tell him her opinion of him, and such a flood of abuse poured from her lips that even the peasant women on market day in Villeton could not have equalled it. She continued it for ten minutes by the marble clock over the fire-place. He did not move nor make any sound during this time.

When at last she failed for breath he said: "Madame, I deserve, perhaps, your anger for the thing that I have done this afternoon, but you shall make no reflections upon my friends nor my family. I have lived a life that has not been of the best, and I have done many things during the course of it for which the good God shall one day call me to account, but Mlle. Miriel was, and is, dearer to me than anyone in the world, and I would die many times over rather than any harm should happen to her. M. Marteau——"

"Mention that name to me," the old woman in a trembling voice shook out at him, "and I'll have you whipped by my men-servants."

"He is a good man," continued M. Félicité, "and, maybe, he is a great one. He will care for her like a true gentleman."

Then, suddenly, he gave a little sigh. "You and I, Madame, are old people. The world is

almost done for us. Are we to break the happiness of young eager lives? One day you will be glad of this."

"And who are you, Monsieur, to tell me of what I shall be glad? Who are you to——"

Here suddenly she broke off, turned, under the candle-light, an ashen grey, and, had he not caught her, would have fallen.

"There—in the cabinet—in the drawer to the right—my drops."

He led her carefully to a stiff old sofa that stood against the wall and found what she needed. There was a carafe with water on a tray by the door and he poured some out for her. For an instant he had a horrible fear that the news had killed her. She lay back, with her eyes closed, simply an old crumpled woman, very, very aged, with the paint hard upon her cheeks and her wig a little askew. Then slowly she recovered. For some while he knelt at her side.

"Madame," he said at last, "for what I have done here abuse me as you will. It matters but little to me now with what the rest of my life may be concerned."

She sat up, pulled her wig straight, and smoothed her dress.

"Monsieur," she said, "ring my bell that my servants may receive orders that you are never again to be admitted into this house."

He got up slowly and moved to the bell by the door. Her eyes followed his broad, straight figure, almost, it seemed, tenderly——

"You are a brave man," she said. "To have done what you have done, to have spoken as you have spoken."

"'MENTION THAT NAME TO ME,' THE OLD WOMAN IN A TREMBLING VOICE SHOOK OUT AT HIM, 'AND I'LL HAVE YOU WHIPPED BY MY MEN-SERVANTS.'"

He turned round and looked at her.

"Is it true that you are lonely?" she asked.

"I have my friends," he answered her.

"You were my only one," she said, still wistfully.

"I shall always be at your service." Then, as he heard the servant enter, he turned, a slight flush on his cheeks, expecting his order of dismissal.

The Comtesse's voice behind him said: "Phillipe, Mlle. Miriel will not sleep here to-night." Then, slowly: "This gentleman will stay and dine with me this evening."

MARY PICKFORD

Whose Real Name is Gladys Smith.

THE STORY OF A WONDER CHILD WHO HAS BECOME THE PETER PAN OF THE MOVIES.

By EDWIN CARTY RANCK.

IT seems incredible that anyone upon whom the limelight has shone so dazzlingly could have concealed anything from the public. But there is a fact in Mary Pickford's life that has been considered either too incredible or too unromantic to receive any publicity. We all know that this Peter Pan of the movies is five feet in her silk-stocking feet; that her eyes are brown and her hair golden and all curly; that she has climbed the theatrical ladder by the rounds of melodramatic and legitimate acting into a movie wonderland as romantic as that which Jack discovered when he climbed the magic bean-stalk; that she is still in her twenties and looks ten; that she is married to Owen Moore; that she receives—and earns—twenty thousand pounds a year, and that her mother is her practical business manager; but we all didn't know until recently that Mary Pickford was a bread-winner at the stupendous age of five—and that her real name is Smith.

This modern fairy tale begins in the year 1898, when the Valentine Stock Company of Toronto, Canada, engaged an unobtrusive little woman to play character parts. This little woman's name was Smith, and it was known that she wore widow's weeds and was the youthful mother and sole support of three little Smiths, ranging from two to five years of age. She had not played many *rôles* when the stock company decided to produce that whimsical old play, "Bootle's Baby," and the difficult problem arose of procuring the baby.

Now it happened that Mrs. Smith had come to rehearsal one day with her eldest child, Gladys, aged five, and she heard of this frantic search for Bootle's baby.

"We must find a suitable child to play this part," said the despairing manager.

This was the future Mary Pickford's first stage cue, and she took it with the decision that was afterwards to stand her in such good stead.

"I'll do it," she piped up, and the manager gazed in amazement at Mrs. Smith's eldest, aged five, who stood before him in a pair of patched and worn shoes, her legs encased in intricately darned stockings—eyes bright and serious.

"You'll *what?*" he exclaimed.

"I'll be Bootle's baby," she explained, eyeing him with the deadly solemnity of five.

The future Mary Pickford got the job.

For a year little Gladys Smith played child *rôles*. Her parts were not very arduous, but it was necessary for her to be present at every rehearsal, for her mother was playing regularly and the child had to wait patiently until the end of the play.

Luckily for the future Mary Pickford, the stage cat presented the theatre with a large family of dramatic kittens at this impressionistic period of the child's life, and the tot derived great joy from the furry family.

Not to this day has she lost her love for kittens, and in rehearsing one of her most successful photo-plays she almost gave up her life—literally—to save a baby cat from a watery grave.

It was while Miss Pickford was rehearsing "Hulda of Holland" that the incident occurred. One of the episodes of the picture shows Mary

MARY PICKFORD.
Walker's World's Films, Ltd.

Pickford in a vessel drifting out to sea. The vessel selected for her use was an aged fishing schooner, and after it had been towed out to sea by two tugs it was set adrift with Miss Pickford, supposedly, the only one on board.

Gazing disconsolately upon the ocean, as the forlorn Hulda, Mary Pickford leaned over the side of the vessel and clung tearfully to an absurdly small kitten, while Maurice Tourneur, hidden from sight, directed the camera.

Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, the schooner listed toward the bow and rapidly settled in the water. The old boat had sprung a leak, something which was not in the scenario of the film. Mary Pickford's simulated distress changed to feminine fright as the waves broke over the schooner, and she called to Tourneur, who fought his way to Mary as she clung, waist-high in water, to the helm, and also to the kitten, that was miaowing in fright.

"Let go of the kitten!" shouted Tourneur.

"I won't!" was Mary's spirited reply. "This kitten goes with me."

And the kitten did, although it was hardly more than a ball of wet fur when it was finally rescued by motor-boats.

It was while playing in "Edmund Burke" that Mrs. Smith decided to rename the little Smiths for stage purposes. This step required careful consideration, but she finally solved the problem by annexing the name of her paternal grandmother, which was Pickford. So the Smiths now vanish from this chronicle, and hereafter we are to consider the fortunes of Mrs. Pickford and her precocious daughter, Mary, *née* Gladys.

All the Pickfords acted in "Edmund Burke."

And everybody worked, even including Brother Jack, then a sturdy little boy, who, much against his will, donned a wig and petticoats and played girl parts, protesting to his mother with masculine indignation at the close of each performance.

Through all this period of gipsying on the road, little Mary Pickford kept her eyes and ears so wide open that nothing escaped them. She was absorbing by keen mental processes those "tremendous trifles" of the player's art that are so essential to stage success. She was learning what to do with her hands and feet and how to control the muscles of her face; how to look grave and gay by turns, and how to telegraph mental impressions to an audience by the wireless system of pantomime. Everywhere she went she was a favourite with audiences.

By way of various one-night stands she at length arrived in a New Jersey town, the nearest she had ever come to the great feverish city of glamour and riches toward which every actress sooner or later turns ambitious feet. And one memorable Thursday morning Mary Pickford cut rehearsals and the Gordian knot at the same time and hied her New York-ward with her little chin tilted at a determined angle.

Theatrical history was to be made that morning. As the ferry-boat brought her closer and closer to the city of her dreams the day seemed fateful with potentialities. She was tingling with excitement, and her heart was pounding madly.

On this wonderful morning Mr. David Belasco was conducting the first rehearsal of "The Warrens of Virginia," still ignorant of the fact that a determined little girl was headed his way.

IN "RAGS"—ONE OF HER GREATEST SUCCESSES.

Walker's World's Films, Ltd.

At the stage door of the Belasco Theatre she demanded, with that imperious little way of hers, to see the master of the show. The doorkeeper was a kindly soul—unusually so for a stage doorkeeper—but he informed her politely that what she asked was impossible. The child was unperturbed by his refusal.

"I *must* see him," she said, simply. "I've cut rehearsal just to come. I've *got* to see him."

And there was something in her manner that prompted the doorkeeper to make a timid request of Mr. Belasco. The request was, of course, refused. The first rehearsal of "The Warrens of Virginia" was not going satisfactorily—the child part of Betty Warren was not well filled. Mr. Belasco had no time to interview a little unknown, even if she had cut a rehearsal and come all the way from an obscure Jersey town.

As kindly as possible the doorkeeper broke the news to Mary. Then the Fates grinned and the doorkeeper had one of the surprises of his life, for little Mary Pickford gave vent to one of those wind-stormish outbursts of temper for which the great Mary Pickford is now famous, and which cause her millions of admirers throughout the country to chuckle with huge enjoyment.

Before the astounded doorkeeper really knew what had happened, a small, tense, and tornado-like figure was projected through the stage door of the old theatre and landed upon the stage, breathless and panting. It was Mary Pickford's first and most dramatic entrance upon any New York stage.

The child regained her self-possession long before the scandalized actors had regained theirs. With that irresistible smile of hers she crossed the stage and confronted Mr. Belasco.

"Oh," she exclaimed, delightedly, "I know you by your picture."

Drama always has and always will appeal to Mr. Belasco—and this was drama personified.

After that the rehearsals for "The Warrens of Virginia" went smoothly, for the child part of Betty Warren was being played with more than adequate skill by Miss Mary Pickford.

This is what Mr. Belasco has to say about her:—

"Rehearsing Mary Pickford was a great pleasure. She was a hard worker, the first at rehearsals and the last to go.

"It was remarkable how she could visualize a story. Often I would tell her one, and even as I told it she would illustrate it with her ever-changing expressions and delicately subtle movements of body.

"On the first night of 'The Warrens of Virginia' little Mary was the most composed of the entire company. This same composure has been one of her greatest assets on the screen. Her features did not become strained. She is all repose—easy and graceful at all times. From the first she gave promise of the ability that has since made her the greatest motion-picture artist in the world.

"Before she left me Miss Pickford said: 'Mr. Belasco, remember, no matter where I am or what I am doing, when

you want me just let me know, and I'll come.'

"I did not see her again for a number of years, but I watched her grow in popularity. Then came the time when I wanted to produce a child's play, 'A Good Little Devil.'

"By this time Mary Pickford was famous and had become known throughout the land as the 'Queen of the Movies.' But I sent for her and she came to me that day.

"'Mary,' I said to her, 'I have a beautiful part, one that is just suited to you. You will make a great success in it and I need you in it.'

"'Do you really and truly need me?'

"'I certainly do.'

"'Then I'll come back to you,' she said.

"Her success in the difficult *rôle* of the little blind girl was phenomenal. Nothing like her remarkable performance of a child's part had ever been seen in New York or elsewhere. And her reward came when she was sought by managers with such eagerness that she commanded the highest salary paid to any moving-picture actress in the world."

For three seasons Mary Pickford continued successfully in "The Warrens of Virginia." It was at the end of this period that the craze for motion pictures was at its zenith, and as the bread and butter problem was again becoming somewhat of an issue with the little actress, with no new Belasco part looming up on the near horizon, she decided to investigate the photo-play possibilities in New York.

For several weeks she remained an extra, again awaiting the call for her short and unimportant part, always on time, obedient, quiet, and unobtrusive. Finally, however, apparently by chance, she was cast for a part—a leading part—in which she played with a good-looking young leading man named Owen Moore. The two young people, enacting fictitious love scenes in the tawdry glare of the studio lights, found real love, and they were married.

Last summer Mary Pickford "did her bit" by producing "The Little American," which was a poignant protest against the atrocities committed by the Germans in France, uncompromising in its graphic realism and splendidly acted by Miss Pickford, who rose to heights of emotional intensity never before reached in any of her less tragic pictures.

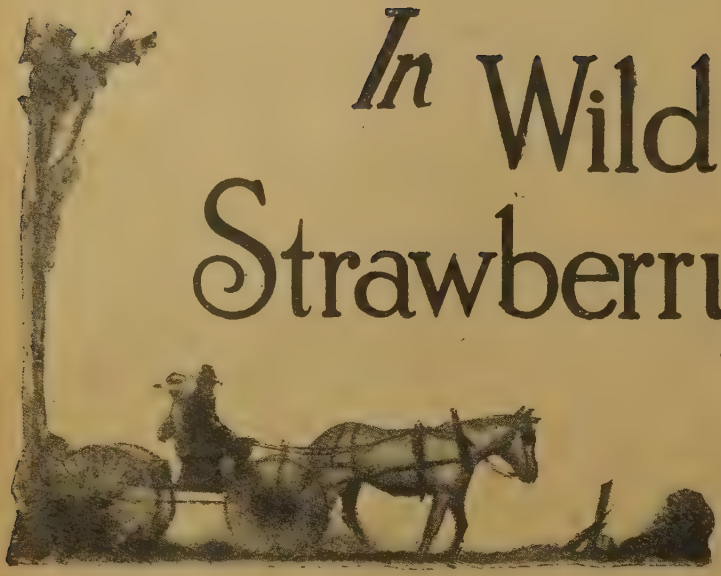
At present, however, she is doing her bit in a much more practical way than appearing in a war film. She has sent two ambulances to the Red Cross for use in France and has "adopted" six hundred American soldier boys. Yes, amazing as it may sound, Mary Pickford is the "war mother" of six hundred husky "Sammies," who are members of the Second Battalion First California Field Artillery. They are now known as "Mary Pickford's Fighting Six Hundred," and she has agreed to keep them supplied with tobacco and other delicacies for the duration of the war. She has also given each one of these soldiers a gold locket containing her miniature. They will wear these lockets when they go into action "somewhere in France."

A CHARACTERISTIC MARY PICKFORD SCENE FROM "THE EAGLE'S MATE."
Walker's World's Films, Ltd.

This patriotic little star is indefatigable in her efforts to make the lot of the enlisted men in her own country and "over there" more comfortable. In her large California studios, where her successful photo-plays are rehearsed, she maintains a permanent tobacco fund for the soldiers and personally collects money and "smokes" every week from members of her company and other workers in the studios. This fund is the pet among her many charitable activities.

It is easy to understand Miss Pickford's success in child parts when one considers that she has never grown up. As the Peter Pan of the Movies she is always at home when surrounded by youngsters.

"I haven't any 'methods' of acting," says Miss Pickford, who is now appearing solely for the Artcraft Pictures Corporation. "It is easy for me to act the part of a child, because I adore children. You see, I associate with little girls until I really forget I'm grown up. I transform myself into a little girl for the time being, and act as she would act in similar circumstances. That was the way I did 'A Poor Little Rich Girl.' While I was playing that part I *was* the poor little rich girl, suffering all of her unsatisfied yearnings for the things that money couldn't buy."



In Wild Strawberry Time

By WILLIAM GERARD CHAPMAN.

Illustrated by H. V. B. Kline and Tom Peddie.

THE early morning light washed in a grey wave over the dark green crest of the spruce forest, and shortly the valley was suffused with shimmering gold as the sun's first beams fell upon the mist-curtain that overhung the low-lying ground. Each tiny atom of moisture among the millions in the dew-laden atmosphere reflected the golden tint radiantly, then slowly dimmed and was absorbed by the new warmth that came creeping into the air. As the last curling wisps of vapour dissolved, the sunlight swept over the wild meadow, disclosing its rich enamelling of wild flowers and lush green grass. Where the earth dipped slightly to hold the seeping water of a turbulent stream that flowed near by, a shallow mere fringed with purple-glowing flag was the last to yield its dew coverlet to the spreading rays.

Emerging from the black wall of trees that rimmed this quiet glade, a she-bear with a single cub at her side cast appraising eyes over the sparkling expanse. Halting for a moment at the meadow's edge she sniffed the air inquiringly, then shambled through the wet grass to drink at the pool. The cub's tiny bright eyes snapped with mischievous interest in each object that met his view. He suppressed his exuberance, however, for already he knew that quietness and caution were advisable in the open spaces until they were examined thoroughly for possible lurking dangers.

The mother-bear drank of the clear cool water, and with her morning thirst satisfied quested the meadow for breakfast. The cub was in the kindergarten stage of schooling, and was learning to supplement the lessening maternal supply of nourishment with more solid food. With twinkling baby eyes he watched his mother as she sought the roots of Indian turnip and prairie crocus and ploughed them up with her snout. The cub sampled them and found the crocus roots eatable, but the pungency of the Indian turnip was rather too biting for his sensitive throat. Anyway, he had breakfasted on more familiar food back in the warm den under an overhanging rock in the heart of the forest, and was not very hungry; and after gratifying a merely curious interest in the provender which his mother found so appetizing, he nuzzled her furry black flank impatiently.

When the roots palled she accepted the hint and the two moved off toward the stream. Here the old bear sniffed along the water's edge, seeking any disabled fish that might have been cast up, and rooting among the stones in the shallows for tadpoles. A scurrying crawfish she hooked up with her claws and drew to the bank for her offspring's edification, watching him with shrewd eyes as he cautiously moved it about with his paw and smelt the strange-appearing thing suspiciously. A nip on his tender muzzle from the tiny pincers sent him back on his haunches with a whimper of astonishment; and the mother, apparently satisfied with this first lesson

in the habits of crawfish, crushed it beneath her foot and swallowed the titbit with smacking satisfaction.

The stream yielded very little food this morning, and her hearty appetite impelled her to seek a more bountiful repast. Giving the cub a low guttural command to follow, she started off across the meadow and into the woods, heading for a chain of burned-over hills that lay to the east. On the other side of this low range she knew of certain unused pasture lands where grew a fruit much to her liking.

A part of the way was rough, but soon they passed the crest of the rise, scrambled down the slope, and gained the open ground below. This was a stretch of stump-land pasture where a settler had once grazed his meagre flocks, but it had long been deserted.

As the two descended to the open an enticing fragrance in the air caused the older bear to sniff hungrily and shuffle along at a faster gait. The pleasing aromatic quality that reached her nose arose from a low dense growth that matted the ground—a carpet of wild strawberries, the tiny deep-red fruit glowing brilliantly among the half-shielding green leaves. The older bear fell to the banquet ravenously.

The cub watched with interested eyes, sniffed the berries, and at last tentatively mouthed them. His sharp little teeth pierced the delicate pulp; he licked the sweet juice from his lips and found it distinctly pleasing.

He ate until he could hold no more, his skin stretched so tight with his first meal of strawberries that he could scarcely waddle along after his more capacious mother. Finally even her enormous appetite was glutted, and she sought a warm grassy pocket between the roots of a large stump and curled up to bask in the sun. The cub sprawled beside her, his little paunch ludicrously distended.

When he had rested long enough to feel the need of renewed activity, his playful sallies ended his mother's sleepy comfort, and she rose and sauntered off toward the deserted buildings, the cub following in her footsteps.

No trace of human odour lay around the little abandoned farmstead. With all a bear's overweening curiosity she nosed about the cabin and sheds expectant of something edible; but nothing rewarded her keen nostrils save the medley of scents left by the porcupines and mice and squirrels that for years had made the place a rendezvous. A red squirrel discovered her presence from his perch on the ridge-pole of the cabin, and ran up and down the moss-grown "scoop" roof, chattering wrathful insults at the intruders. The bear eyed him maliciously for a moment, then ignored the insolent little blackguard and continued her explorations.

The cub at first kept close to his mother's side, ill at ease in these strange surroundings. But gradually youthful curiosity overcame his timidity and he strayed from the protecting presence to do a little investigating on his own account. While he sought to fathom the mystery of some rotting timbers overgrown with weeds that lay in the rear of the cabin, the old bear pursued her vague quest around the outbuildings.

A sudden muffled squalling brought her racing toward the sound, fur bristling along her back and eyes snapping with angry apprehension. The cry was plainly for help, and she was ready to battle any living thing that threatened her offspring. But no marauder was in sight, nor was the cub either, for that matter, though the plaintive squeals still filled the air, sounding strangely unreal but unmistakably his and quite near to her. Puzzled and anxious she sought out his tracks with her nose, but these were so criss-crossed that they only confused her. Her rangings gradually drew the distracted mother closer to the outcry, and at last she knew that it arose from the clump of weeds. Picking her way over the crumbling wood at their roots she came upon a yawning black hole whence the pitiful summons issued.

The cub had tumbled into an old well, the wooden kerb of which lay in decay about its mouth, overgrown with a screening mass of green. Fortunately it was dry and so matted at the bottom with litter that the force of his fall had been broken; the fat little body had suffered nothing worse than a severe shaking up. Terror-stricken with the sudden plunge and the quick enveloping blackness, he squawled miserably for his mother.

Soon he heard her questioning calls and saw the silhouette of her head against the disc of blue light above him. But her arrival brought only the comfort of her presence; she was impotent to rescue him.

With yearning eyes the mother-bear circled the opening, crouching at the brink now and again to look down into the dark hole, whining anxiously and bidding him with low rumblings to try to climb up. The cub whimpered in reply and strove vainly to find footing up the straight walls At first she could not discern the small black-furred form in the denser blackness of the bottom, but as her ceaseless trampling about the edge broke down the weeds the light filtered in and made it possible for her to distinguish him. She flattened herself on the ground beside the well and stretched down first one forepaw and then the other in a fruitless attempt to reach the imploring little captive; and once she tentatively backed to the verge to essay a descent by the usual bear method. But the crumbling of the earth as she sought for a foot-hold with her hind feet discouraged her, and she renewed her circling and impotent whining.

Suddenly she lifted her head to a new and startling sound. It was the beat of quick footfalls that came to her ears, and as they drew closer she growled menacingly and bared her teeth in sullen defiance. Whatever it might be it was advancing upon the cabin from the pasture, and dimly she associated the intruder with her cub's imprisonment in the pitfall. This of a certainty was the author of his mishap, and all her dormant ferocity blazed into being as she lurched forward to give battle to the unknown enemy before it could complete its designs. It was coming rapidly nearer, and she rushed to the

"AS THE ENRAGED MOTHER-BEAR ROUNDED THE BUILDING A FLYING FORM DARTED INSIDE BEFORE SHE COULD STRIKE IT DOWN, AND THE DOOR CRASHED SHUT AGAINST HER SNARLING, SAVAGELY-GRINNING FACE."

front of the cabin to intercept it. As the enraged mother-bear rounded the building a flying form darted inside before she could strike it down, and the door crashed shut against her snarling, savagely-grinning face.

The following instant, to her angry amazement, she was assailed from behind by a screeching fury of teeth and claws. Immediately she found herself engaged in a battle to the death with a second enemy of whose approach she had received no warning.

A little earlier this same day an old buckboard holding two people deeply interested in each other crept over a seldom-travelled backwoods road that skirted the eastern edge of the abandoned farm. The slender pretty girl beside the sturdy young driver looked up into his eyes shyly as he told her of his plans for the future.

Jeff had jumped at the hint dropped by the girl's mother that Sally was to return home that day from her spell of nursing old Miss Hammersmith over at Big Forks; and he had volunteered to go and fetch her. For many months Jeff Tucker had held certain well-defined ideas, which he had not yet come to in his telling of his large plans to Sally. But perhaps Sally Ingalls was not as unaware of what they might be as he imagined. Jeff's eyes said much that his tongue found it difficult to frame. Now he was leading up to the most important phase of his dreams.

An unclouded summer sun distilled from the red-fruited choke-cherry thickets and massed blooms of brier rose and wild raspberry that lined the rutted tracks an essence that the light breezes dissolved into an unmatchable fragrance. And young blood was responding to the urge of the perfumed air, vibrant with the notes of song-sparrows and yellow-hammers that alighted on swaying milk-weed stalks, then rose and alighted again farther on as the buckboard with its absorbed occupants pursued them slowly along the winding road.

But the ancient vehicle was traitor to the lover's cause. As it rolled over a "thank-you-marm" on the down grade of a hill the forward axle snapped and broke—and so did the thread of the young man's discourse. At the sudden lurch Jeff threw his arm round Sally's waist to prevent her falling forward upon the horse, which stopped in his tracks as the whiffle-tree came down about his heels. Sally's always blushing cheeks blushed redder with the contact, and she nimbly drew out of his embrace and stepped to the ground. Jeff covered his lapse with a hasty examination of the wreck and a string of mild expletives.

"Durn the thing! We can't noways get home in it now, Sally," he complained. "Wish I could fasten up that axle, but I've got no wire." He pondered over the situation for a moment. "Tell you what we'll have to do, Sally," he

continued. "I'll tie Whitey here to the fence and foot it back to the Forks and get some baling wire while you wait here; I won't be gone an hour."

"I reckon that's the best we can do," Sally agreed. "But I'll tell you what, Jeff; instead of waiting here I'll tramp over to the old deserted farm and gather a mess of wild strawberries. It's only just across the rise yonder. There's a sight of them growing in the pasture lot and nobody ever goes there berrying. You can stop at home with ma and me for supper and have some of them too," she offered, smiling rosily.

Jeff grinned happily. "Now, that's fine, Sally; you bet I will. And I've got an old grain-bag under the seat you can pick them in." He fished it out, and handing it to Sally strode rapidly back along the road they had travelled.

Sally's lithe young figure swung easily over the rocky, tree-grown rise, and shortly she came to the pasture where the wild strawberries grew. Here the profusion of small scarlet fruit peeping enticingly from its leafy screen delighted her eyes, and she stood for a moment gazing over the inviting prospect. At the far side of the pasture she had a fleeting glimpse of two bears, mother and cub, just before they vanished around a hummock. The wind was blowing toward Sally and they apparently had not become aware of her presence. The sight brought no fear to the backwoods-bred girl, for she knew that unless provoked into defence the black bears of the region would avoid human-kind whenever possible. Rather, she found delight in the incident. "The cunning thing!" Sally murmured smilingly, as she noted the funny waddling gait of the cub. "He's got a tummy full of berries, I reckon, and can only just toddle after his ma."

She fell to picking the fragrant fruit. Gradually she approached the north edge of the pasture where the gloomy spruce forest reared its dark green and black wall. A peculiar chill grew upon her as she drew nearer to the wood. She frowned impatiently at the unpleasant sensation and sought to shrug it away. But it persisted, and something impelled her to glance half apprehensively toward the uprearing tree growth.

Her eyes widened with fear at what they beheld, and she knew that she should have heeded earlier the strange warning semi-consciousness of being spied upon by a malignant presence. For a slender sinuous form, slaty-blue in the shadowy half-light of the trees, was gliding toward her. It was a panther, and she shuddered with sickening dread as all the tales she had heard of the animal's cruelty when once it was inspired to attack a human flitted through her mind. While her thoughts raced the panther was slowly creeping nearer, its gaunt body hugging the ground, the long tail twitching its premonition of a leap. She still stood staring at it, fascinated by the green-glowing eyes that stared malevolently in return. She knew what the twitching of its tail meant—that the big cat was about to leap, that in two or three quick short bounds it would be upon her. With a scream she turned and fled.

Instinctively she headed for the old deserted cabin, for the idea that she might possibly gain it and shut herself in against the panther had quickly occurred to her. For a brief moment the animal hesitated; the shrill cry dismayed it and it shrank back, snarling in angry fear. Then the strong urge that already had overcome the great cat's hereditary indisposition to attack a human prevailed again, and with the encouragement of the girl's evident fright it bounded after her. Its sinewy, graceful body curved over the ground in swift pursuit, but Sally's strong young limbs were fleet and she flew over the springy ground like a deer. For a distance she maintained her lead, but soon she realized with horror that the panther was gaining on her.

As she drew closer to the cabin Sally noted thankfully that the door was open. She gave a spurt and reached the doorway a rod or two ahead of her pursuer.

But just as she was about to plunge through the doorway she was appalled by the sudden apparition that rounded the corner of the cabin. A big black demon of a bear, with surprising agility for so lumbering a body, shot toward her with a ferocious menacing cough. She saw its gleaming savage teeth and evilly snapping red-rimmed eyes as the beast, almost upon her, struck out savagely with its deadly claw-armed forefoot. But the spurt carried her through the opening a fraction of a second in advance of the blow, and she whirled about and slammed shut the door as the monster rushed upon it. Feeling feverishly for the fastening, her fingers fell upon the rude wooden bar which by good fortune remained intact, and she dropped it quickly into place. Then she sank to the floor, quivering and shaken.

Almost instantly there arose on the other side of the door a raucous confusion of snarls, growls, and thrashing bodies. Sally understood what had taken place; she had not had time to realize the likelihood of this meeting of the two pursuers, and the evidence that her assailants had come together in battle sent her into a spasm of hysterical laughter.

Outside the combat raged fiercely. Seldom does a panther venture to attack a bear, and if the bear has a cub then the big cat will avoid a meeting with all possible haste. And the bear, unless it is a she-bear whose cub is threatened, will evade conflict with a panther if evasion is compatible with dignity.

But in this instance the paths of both animals had converged to a common point; each was intent on striking down the human being who had escaped at the place of meeting, and each was inflamed with the lust to kill. As in the cub lay the impelling motive of the bear's attempt to destroy the supposed enemy, so the panther's own offspring were the moving cause of her murderous venture. Fearful of human beings as she was, the short commons on which she had subsisted since the recent disappearance of her mate had made her ravenous for food.

The drain upon her body by her two always hungry cubs required hearty fare, and if she was to satisfy them she must forage more successfully

than she had of late. Consequently when the woman, who the panther instinctively knew was the less dangerous of the hated man-kind, had appeared before her eyes as she noiselessly prowled the thickets for game, the pangs of famine had overcome her dread. Forthwith she had begun a furtive stalking of the unsuspecting berry-picker.

When the expected quarry darted into the log sanctuary, and the bear miraculously shot into view at the same instant, the panther had neither opportunity nor inclination to draw back. The bear was interfering with her hunt, the unforgivable breach of law among the wild earthlings, and she descended upon the back of the hulking black interloper in a frenzy of rage and disappointment.

The bear twisted about impotently, then rolled over, the better to dislodge the clutching horror. Her heavy weight nearly crushed the breath out of the panther's body, but the cat managed to retain her advantage by squirming round until the two were locked in a death-grapple face to face. Here the panther was better placed for the deadly work of her claws, and she raked the bear's vulnerable spots with long, eviscerating strokes. The bear was by no means idle with her own deep-cutting weapons, which tore mercilessly at the tawny hide; while both infuriated fighters were employing their savage jaws with ruthless energy.

The bear, being at a woeful disadvantage, was the first to weaken. Her opponent suddenly bored into the relaxing neck and her searching teeth speedily brought an end to the heavier animal's resistance. The bear collapsed into a sprawling, inert black heap, and the victorious cat staggeringly withdrew from her vanquished enemy. The object of her chase forgotten, she dragged her lacerated body away from the battle-ground, and slowly and painfully crawled in the direction of her den.

Her heart beating wildly as her ferocious jailers fought just outside the door of her refuge, Sally glanced about the cabin for a weapon. But nothing offered. She wondered if the victor would try to force an entrance, and how soon the fight would end. One or the other of the animals must soon succumb in the grim contest.

Several times the struggling animals brought up against the door, which creaked ominously with the impact; and once Sally's heart came up into her throat as a particularly violent crash caused several of the decaying wooden pegs of the fastenings to snap under the stress. She leaned her weight against the bulging planks and held the bar in place with her hands. The door withstood the shock, and shortly the danger passed for the moment as the wildly agitated bodies rolled away.

The sounds of conflict gradually diminished in fury as the minutes passed, until the listening girl could hear only the low grumble of worrying jaws. Finally, Sally's straining ears heard a gurgling, choking sigh—and then quiet. Now her fear rose again as she wondered what might next transpire. Apprehensively she set her gaze on the window through which she half expected to see a fierce head appear as the victor inexorably returned to its first quest.

But a faint call came through the window instead.

Sally's heart beat faster with joy as she recognized Jeff's voice. Then a new dread assailed her—perhaps Jeff would, all unwarned, run into whichever animal it was that had survived and would be attacked by it! Ignoring the danger to herself in drawing the beast's attention, she approached the window and screamed a caution to Jeff, whom she could now discern running across the pasture toward the cabin. Her voice drowned out his own shouts as he raced toward her, either failing to hear her warning or choosing to ignore it.

He was without any weapon of defence, and the danger into which he came plunging with great unheeding strides filled her with misgivings. A feeling that was more than anxiety, more than admiration, surged into Sally's heart. Under its prompting she turned swiftly, lifted the bar of the door, and throwing it open ran out to meet her man, to share with him the peril he was braving for her sake. She almost stumbled upon the dead bear; it was the panther they had to fear.

A joyous shout greeted her. Jeff bounded forward and gathered her to him. For a moment she struggled and tried to tell him of the danger that lurked about, but he quickly reassured her. Then as the truth dawned upon Sally she quieted in his arms, and he held her close, this time as though by right. Into the eyes of each slowly there crept an understanding that made unnecessary the halting words Jeff had been about to utter when the buckboard collapsed—a pledge as irrevocable in the minds of these two as any ceremony.

Happy and unabashed they stood holding each other's hands as Sally detailed her experience and Jeff explained his coming.

"I feared for you, Sally, when I saw where you dropped the bag of strawberries in the pasture. I'd come over to find you when I got back to the buckboard and you weren't there. Then I shouted and looked all about, and saw your running tracks and the tracks of a panther. I followed them, and I *was* scared."

"What's that, Jeff?" interrupted Sally, nervously, pressing closer to him. They listened, and heard the whining of an animal in distress, the sound strangely stifled.

He studied the plaintive cry intently. His forest-trained ears quickly identified it.

"It's a young one, most likely a bear cub. Let's look."

"Of course," remembered Sally. "I'd forgot about the cub I saw with the mother bear when I first got to the pasture. I wonder where on earth it can be?"

Together they searched to locate its hiding-place. The whimpering calls finally drew them to the well, and looking down they saw the imprisoned baby bear.

"The poor little thing!" said Sally, compassionately. "It's frightened to death. Can't

"THE BEAR WAS INTERFERING WITH THE PANTHER'S HUNT, AND SHE DESCENDED UPON THE BACK OF THE HULKING BLACK INTERLOPER IN A FRENZY OF RAGE AND DISAPPOINTMENT."

you get it out, Jeff? We mustn't leave it here to die."

"Of course; but I'll have to get a rope and someone to help. I'm curious about that panther, though; let's have a look at it first."

They followed the bloody trail of the animal until they came to where it had fallen in its tracks. The stark tawny form showed grim proof of the punishment its adversary had inflicted, and the wonder was that the big cat had dragged its sorely wounded body so far. In the gaunt flanks and the evidence of its motherhood the woodsman's eyes read another chapter of the tragedy.

"And now I understand something else," he said. "It isn't often a panther'll attack a human being, but this one has cubs somewhere in the bush and was nearly starved trying to get enough food for herself and them. It must have been her mate Sam Hitchcock killed a week ago. So now there's a couple of young ones that will never grow up to kill sheep."

"But, oh, Jeff, we can't let those poor little kittens starve!" Sally's blue eyes had grown tender with pity for the helpless cubs that doubtless were even now feeling the pangs of hunger. Before her supplicating gaze Jeff's practical view-point underwent a change.

"I'll hunt them out, Sally, if you say so," he said, indulgently. "But the first thing to do is to get you home to your ma; she'll be worrying about you. Then I and your pa can come back with a rope, an' I'll fish out the bear cub and then back-track the panther to her den and—what shall I do with them all, Sally; kill them to save their lives?" he grinned.

"THEN AS THE TRUTH DAWNED UPON SALLY SHE QUIETED IN HIS ARMS, AND HE HELD HER CLOSE."

Sally was nonplussed for a moment. She hated the thought of having three innocent, cunning little wild babies killed, even if they were of the "varmint" kind. But of course it wouldn't do to turn the barnyard into a menagerie; her father would have objections. Then her face brightened and she beamed a shy smile at her stalwart lover.

"We could sell them to that collector of wild animals for circuses who comes around, Jeff, and buy a lot of nice homey things——" Sally paused, blushing at the picture her words called up.

"You bet we can!" agreed Jeff, delightedly, admiration for the clever thought shining in his eyes. "You've got a wonderful little head, Sally."

Jeff's delight was more for this spoken proof of the wonderful new relationship between them than for the material aspect of Sally's plan; but he added a suggestion of his own. "Don't forget that we've got a bear-skin rug for the house already, Sally. Pity a panther hide's no good in summer-time—we'd have our floor nearly covered!" He kissed her glowing cheeks.

"Let's hurry back to the road so that I can start early on my collecting trip," he proposed; and hand in hand they raced happily across the strawberry-matted pasture.

LEST YOU FORGET!

DO not forget that THE STRAND MAGAZINE *may now be sent* POST FREE *to British soldiers and sailors at home and abroad. All you need do is to hand your copies, without wrapper or address, over the counter at any post-office in the United Kingdom, and they will be sent by the authorities wherever they will be most welcome.*

Three of Them.

CHATS WITH CHILDREN.

III.—SPECULATIONS.

BY

A. CONAN DOYLE

Illustrated by L. Hocknell.

THE three children were sitting together in a bunch upon the rug in the gloaming. Baby was talking, so Daddy behind his newspaper pricked up his ears, for the young lady was silent as a rule, and every glimpse of her little mind was of interest. She was nursing the disreputable little downy quilt which she called Wriggly and much preferred to any of her dolls.

"I wonder if they will let Wriggly into heaven," she said.

The boys laughed. They generally laughed at what Baby said.

"If they won't I won't go in, either," she added.

"Nor me, neither, if they don't let in my Teddy-bear," said Dimples.

"I'll tell them it is a nice, clean, blue Wriggly," said Baby. "I love my Wriggly." She cooed over it and hugged it.

"What about that, Daddy?" asked Laddie, in his earnest fashion. "Are there toys in heaven, do you think?"

"Of course there are. Everything that can make children happy."

"As many toys as in Hamley's shop?" asked Dimples.

"More," said Daddy, stoutly.

"Oo!" from all three.

"Daddy, dear," said Laddie, "I've been wondering about the deluge."

"Yes, dear. What was it?"

"Well, the story about the Ark. All those animals were in the Ark, just two of each, for forty days. Wasn't that so?"

"That is the story."

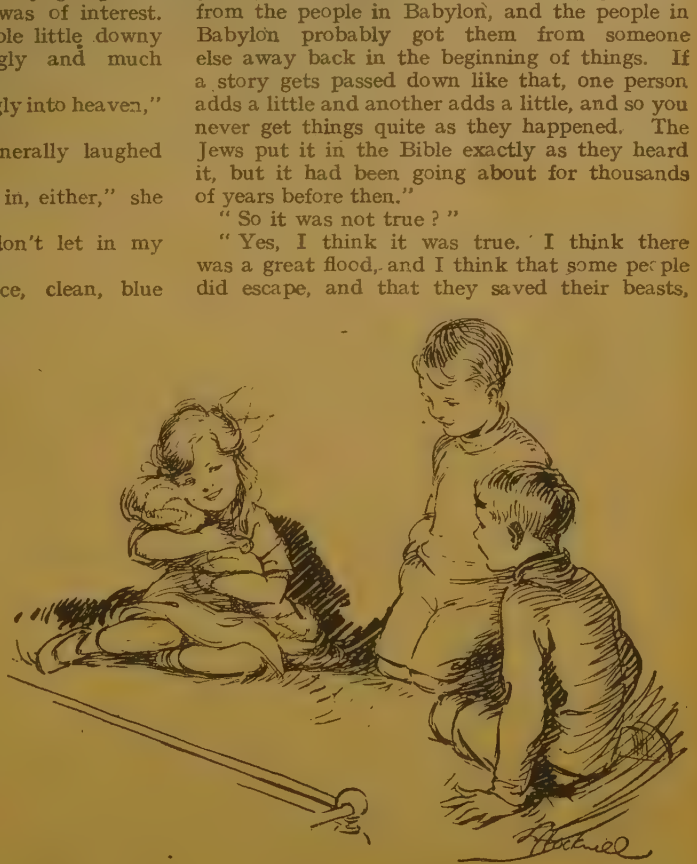
"Well, then, what did the carnivorous animals eat?"

One should be honest with children and not put them off with ridiculous explanations. Their questions about such matters are generally much more sensible than their parents' replies.

"Well, dear," said Daddy, weighing his words, "these stories are very, very old. The Jews put them in the Bible, but they got them from the people in Babylon, and the people in Babylon probably got them from someone else away back in the beginning of things. If a story gets passed down like that, one person adds a little and another adds a little, and so you never get things quite as they happened. The Jews put it in the Bible exactly as they heard it, but it had been going about for thousands of years before then."

"So it was not true?"

"Yes, I think it was true. I think there was a great flood, and I think that some people did escape, and that they saved their beasts,



"'I LOVE MY WRIGGLY.' SHE COOED OVER IT AND HUGGED IT."

Copyright, 1918, by A. Conan Doyle.

just as we should try to save Nigger and the Monkstown cocks and hens if we were flooded out. Then they were able to start again when the waters went down, and they were naturally very grateful to God for their escape."

"What did the people who didn't escape think about it?"

"Well, we can't tell that."

"They wouldn't be very grateful, would they?"

"Their time was come," said Daddy, who was a bit of a Fatalist. "I expect it was the best thing."

"It was jolly hard luck on Noah being swallowed by a fish after all his trouble," said Dimples.

"Silly ass! It was Jonah that was swallowed. Was it a whale, Daddy?"

"A whale! Why, a whale couldn't swallow a herring!"

"A shark, then?"

"Well, there again you have an old story which has got twisted and turned a good deal. No doubt he was a holy man who had some great escape at sea, and then the sailors and others who admired him invented this wonder."

"Daddy," said Dimples, suddenly, "should we do just the same as Jesus did?"

"Yes, dear; He was the noblest Person that ever lived."

"Well, did Jesus lie down every day from twelve to one?"

"I don't know that He did."

"Well, then, I won't lie down from twelve to one."

"If Jesus had been a growing boy and had been ordered to lie down by His Mumty and the Doctor, I am sure He would have done so."

"Did He take malt extract?"

"He did what He was told, my son—I am sure of that. He was a good man, so He must have been a good boy—perfect in all He did."

"Baby saw God yesterday," remarked Laddie, casually.

Daddy dropped his paper.

"Yes, we made up our mind we would all lie on our backs and stare at the sky until we saw God. So we put the big rug on the lawn and then we all lay down side by side, and stared and stared. I saw nothing, and Dimples saw nothing, but Baby says she saw God."

Baby nodded in her wise way.

"I saw Him," she said.

"THE FAIRY JUMPED ON THE CHAIR AND THEN DOWN, AND WENT ACROSS THE ROOM."

"What was He like, then?"

"Oh, just God."

She would say no more, but hugged her Wriggly.

The Lady had entered and listened with some trepidation to the frank audacity of the children's views. Yet the very essence of faith was in that audacity. It was all so unquestionably real.

"Which is strongest, Daddy, God or the Devil?" It was Laddie who was speculating now.

"Why, God rules everything, of course."

"Then why doesn't He kill the Devil?"

"And scalp him?" added Dimples.

"That would stop all trouble, wouldn't it, Daddy?"

Poor Daddy was rather floored. The Lady came to his help.

"If everything was good and easy in this world, then there would be nothing to fight against, and so, Laddie, our characters would never improve."

"It would be like a football match with all the players on one side," said Daddy.

"If there was nothing bad, then, nothing would be good, for you would have nothing to compare by," added the Lady.

"Well, then," said Laddie, with the remorseless logic of childhood, "if that is so, then the Devil is very useful; so he can't be so very bad, after all."

"Well, I don't see that," Daddy answered. "Our Army can only show how brave it is by fighting the German Emperor, but that does not prove that the German Emperor is a very nice person, does it now?

"Besides," Daddy continued, improving the occasion, "you must not think of the Devil as a person. You must think of all the mean things one could do, and all the dirty things, and all the cruel things, and that is really the Devil you are fighting against. You couldn't call them useful, could you?"

The children thought over this for a little.

"Daddy," said Laddie, "have *you* ever seen God?"

"No, my boy. But I see His works. I expect that is as near as we can get in this world. Look at all the stars at night, and think of the Power that made them and keeps each in its proper place."

"He couldn't keep the shooting stars in their proper place," said Dimples.

"I expect He meant them to shoot," said Laddie.

"Suppose they all shot, what jolly nights we should have!" cried Dimples.

"Yes," said Laddie; "but after one night they would all have gone, and a nice thing then!"

"Well, there's always the moon," remarked Dimples. "But, Daddy, is it true that God listens to all we say?"

"I don't know about that," Daddy answered, cautiously. You never know into what trap those quick little wits may lead you. The Lady was more rash, or more orthodox.

"Yes, dear, He does hear all you say."

"Is He listenin' now?"

"Yes, dear."

"Well, I call it vewy rude of Him!"

Daddy smiled, and the Lady gasped.

"Itisn't rude," said Laddie. "It is His duty, and He *has* to notice what you are doing and saying. Daddy, did you ever see a fairy?"

"No, boy."

"I saw one once."

Laddie is the very soul of truth, quite painfully truthful in details, so that his quiet remark caused attention.

"Tell us about it, dear."

He described it with as little emotion as if it were a Persian cat. Perhaps his perfect faith had indeed opened something to his vision.

"It was in the day nursery. There was a chair by the window. The fairy jumped on the chair and then down, and went across the room."

"What was it dressed like?"

"All in grey, with a long cloak. It was about as big as Baby's doll. I could not see its arms, for they were under the cloak."

"Did he look at you?"

"No, he was sideways, and I never really saw his face. He had a little cap. That's the only fairy I ever saw. Of course, there was Father Christmas, if you call him a fairy."

"Daddy, was Father Christmas killed in the war?"

"No, boy."

"Because he has never come since the war began. I expect he is fightin' the Jarmans." It was Dimples who was talking.

"Last time he came," said Laddie, "Daddy said one of his reindeers had hurt its leg in the ruts of the Monkstown Lane. Perhaps that's why he never comes."

"He'll come all right after the war," said Daddy, "and he'll be redder and whiter and jollier than ever." Then Daddy clouded suddenly, for he thought of all those who would be missing when Father Christmas came again. Ten loved ones were dead from that one household. The Lady put out her hand, for she always knew what Daddy was thinking.

"They will be there in spirit, dear."

"Yes, and the jolliest of the lot," said Daddy, stoutly. "We'll have our Father Christmas back and all will be well in England."

"But what do they do in India?" asked Laddie.

"THE THREE LITTLE FIGURES ALL KNELT ON THE RUG."

"Why, what's wrong with them?"

"How do the sledge and the reindeer get across the sea? All the parcels must get wet."

"Yes, dear, there *have* been several complaints," said Daddy, gravely. "Halloa, here's Frances! Time's up! Off to bed!"

They got up resignedly, for they were really very good children. "Say your prayers here before you go," said the Lady. The three little figures all knelt on the rug, Baby still cuddling her Wriggly.

"You pray, Laddie, and the rest can join in."

"God bless everyone I love," said the high, clear child-voice. "And make me a good boy, and thank You so much for all the blessings of to-day, And please take care of Alleyne, who is fighting the Germans, and Uncle Cosmo, who is fighting the Germans, and Uncle Woodie, who is fighting the Germans, and all the others who are fighting the Germans, and the men on the ships on the sea, and Grandma and Grandpa, and Mary and Uncle Pat, and don't ever let Daddy and Mumty die. That's all."

"And please send plenty sugar for the poor people," said Baby, in her unexpected way.

"And a little petrol for Daddy," said Dimples.

"Amen!" said Daddy. And the little figures rose for the good-night kiss.

The Girl in the Villa.

By MELVILLE DAVISSON POST.

Illustrated by Balliol Salmon.

RANDOLPH stopped.

The path ran through a thicket of young trees. The spring foliage was beginning to appear. The bushes were close together and the path was enclosed almost as with a hedge.

The sound that had caught his ear was now unmistakable. It was the sound of someone in distress, someone crying softly, just beyond him. There was a musical quality in the voice that made it an illusion of this fairy woodland. It was not the voice of any peasant woman of the Jura. The wood was full of birds.

Beyond, above the green meadows, in the sun of the early springtime, the larks sang. Their notes descended, giving Randolph the sense of an invisible chorus. The man remained unmoving. The voice was quite close beside the path, but it seemed unreal.

For a month he had been sitting idle in Geneva. The great mountains had not drawn him, but this exquisite valley of the Jura was a country of interminable charm. Almost every afternoon he had tramped to Ferney along the high road, and returned across the meadows through this patch of woodland. The soft, green valley swimming in the sunlight, surrounded with the snow-covered wall of the Jura, was in itself an illusion. The wood of small timber ran, a narrow strip, through the length of the meadows touching the highway to the west toward Ferney, where a corner of it continued to the ridge beyond Geneva.

As Randolph listened the voice seemed to change its position.

It moved parallel to the path, but too far in the wood to be seen. He no longer heard the voice, but he could hear distinctly the sound of someone moving in the wood. There was a little opening a few rods ahead, and as he entered it he came suddenly on a girl. She was standing quite still like one bewildered.

The man was profoundly astonished.

The girl was quite young; she was bareheaded and she wore a simple dark-coloured frock which Randolph imagined might be the uniform of a convent. The girl was startled when she saw the man, but she was not afraid, and she came at once to him. She spoke to him in French, but when he shook his head she said in English, with a certain hesitation as though one were touching the keys of an instrument carefully with the fingers:—

"I have lost my way. How does one return to Geneva? The paths, Monsieur, do not go anywhere."

This was quite true. The paths through the wood seemed to have been made with the intention of giving one the impression of a considerable forest. They were skilfully laid out. One might follow them for half a day and never come into the open unless one were conscious of their secret. Randolph found that out on the first afternoon that he undertook to come across from Ferney. But he had a sense of direction, and an advance of a few hundred feet from the path easily put him into the open.

"I should be very glad to show you the way," he said. "I am returning to Geneva myself."

And he struck out through the wood. In a few moments they were at the edge of the meadowland which extends to the hills behind Geneva.

But the girl did not follow him into the open.

"Oh, Monsieur," she said. "I cannot go this way. I shall be seen."

Randolph came back, and the girl made a little explanation.

"I have run away," she said, "and I must get back unobserved; is that the right word?"

Randolph laughed.

"That's precisely the right word," he said. "We can follow the wood to the highway yonder, cross it, and continue in it to the top of the hill."

The man now had a clue to the riddle. The girl belonged to some school; some convent, perhaps. There were any quantities of great villas protected by walls on the hill behind Geneva. No doubt some of these were schools for young ladies—he did not know—they might be anything. At any rate, the walls and the high, spear-pointed iron fences would have to be escaped from if one got out without the will of the gate-keeper.

He found the path and the two of them went through the wood to where the highway divides it on the road to Ferney. He stopped on the edge of the wood and spoke to his companion.

"Shall we run across?" he said.

The girl put her hand on his arm and looked out through the low branches of the trees. She

leaned forward, parting the branches carefully. Then suddenly she screamed and sprang back.

"Oh, Monsieur," she said, "there was a snake just there in the foliage."

Randolph looked for the snake, parting the leaves with his walking-stick, but he could not find it. The girl was frightened, but she was not a person of feeble courage.

"Let us run across now," she said.

They went a little farther down the path and were about to come out into the road when again the girl stopped and caught his arm.

A man was passing just beyond them on the way to Geneva. He was a tall old man, dressed like an Englishman, but the clothing alone was English. The man evidently belonged to some race of Western Europe and he walked with an even, precise, military step.

The girl made some exclamation in a language which Randolph did not understand, but he got the impression that this man had something to do with the school from which she had run away, or at least was known to her, and a person whom she had some reason to fear. The man was singing as he walked, some light aria of an opera. The voice and the queer lilt of the song impressed Randolph. He was to hear it again.

When the man was out of sight, Randolph and the girl crossed the road and, keeping within the cover of the wood, ascended the long slope of the hill. Here they came out into an old abandoned road almost arched over with a forgotten hedge. The girl now led the way. They went down this road, which crossed the crest of the ridge. The road ended before a big iron gate. It was a huge gate made of spear-headed iron spikes that curved inward. It was locked with a padlock and it was set in a high wall. The gate was very old. It was encrusted with rust.

"I will show you how I got out, Monsieur," she said.

The head of one of the long, spear-pointed iron rods had rusted off and she was able to move it. It left a narrow opening. The girl slipped through and pulled the spike back into place. She smiled.

"Good-bye, Monsieur——?"

"Randolph," he said.

"Good-bye, Monsieur Randolph," she repeated.

"Oh, no," he said, "it is not good-bye; you will run away from school again."

Her eyes widened at the word.

"This is not a school," she said.

"Not a school?" the man echoed.

"No," she said, "it's not a school. It is—it is a prison," and then she ran away swiftly, like a wild thing.

Randolph remained standing in the abandoned road before the ancient iron gate. Then finally he began to look for some way to return to Geneva. He finally found a way through a hedge which came out on the great road that goes along the crest of the hill. To his surprise this road passed in front of the grounds into which the girl had entered. The heavy wall continued, and there was in this wall, opening on the road, another of those enormous iron gates.

As he approached, a man came out of this gate. He turned about and looked, then he passed on down the road towards Geneva. He was a heavy young man with big shoulders. His clothes were foreign with an exaggerated cut at the waist, but there seemed something racially familiar in spite of the disguise. Randolph got only a glimpse of the face as the man came out, but he thought it was the most villainous human face that he had ever seen in the world.

The man, before Randolph on the road, got a tram at the foot of the hill. Randolph continued on foot to his hotel. He was profoundly puzzled. But he felt that it was a matter about which he could not inquire.

The only inquiry which he ventured to make did not help him.

He asked the *concierge* what prison was located on the face of the hills, above Geneva, in the direction from which he had descended. The two-franc tip accompanying the inquiry brought a detailed explanation. There was, of course, no prison in that beautiful, residential portion of Geneva. It contained only the villas of the great families in Europe. The *concierge* named them as one would recite a page of the Almanac de Gotha. Some were to let, some of the oldest, the very finest villas of royalty, especially the nobility of Russia now that it was exiled and in need of funds. But if Monsieur wished to consider one of them—he would bring the agent, and so forth.

Randolph finally escaped to his room looking out over Lake Leman, always beautiful, but now like a fairy picture with the great stone-boats descending with their coloured, two-pointed sails. Randolph sat down at the window, his elbows on the sill, his chin in his hands, and looked out on the fairy lake glimmering in the sun and the looming tip of the white mountains in the distance.

So it was not a school and it was not a prison.

What was it? Who was the aged foreigner in the English clothes on the road from Ferney, and who was the villainous beast of a man who had come out of the locked gate? And who was the girl? He began to think about the girl and he laughed softly.

It was all too ridiculous.

He was supposed to be sitting here in Geneva nursing a broken heart. Everybody had expected him to marry Edith Marshall. It was the sort of marriage that was precisely proper. Their lands adjoined; they had grown up together and the alliance had been taken for granted. He had taken it for granted. When the girl a little later announced her engagement to another man he had left for this tour of the Continent.

According to the gossips he must have a broken heart!

He was disappointed, for the marriage was a thing which he had always considered as in a way settled, and he was very fond of Edith Marshall. He sat there for a long time trying to analyze his queer state of mind. He could remember very calmly how his old friend had looked, on occasion. She was always very well dressed, and she was a woman that would not

"THEY WENT A LITTLE FARTHER DOWN THE PATH AND WERE ABOUT TO COME OUT INTO THE ROAD WHEN AGAIN THE GIRL STOPPED AND CAUGHT HIS ARM. A MAN WAS PASSING JUST BEYOND THEM ON THE WAY TO GENEVA."

escape attention. He could remember details without emotion.

But here was an experience entirely new.

He could not recall the hair, the eyes, the delicate mouth, the gestures, the precise intonation of the words of this girl without some quickening of the blood. There was an indescribable charm about her. The very mystery seemed to add to this charm.

He had found her following the pathways of adventure!

That night at dinner he got a little light on an element of the affair. The man whom he had seen return from Ferney was in the dining-room. He had changed to evening clothes, but Randolph could not be mistaken in the face. He had only to go to the *concierge* with another tip for the man's history. It was the Austrian Baron Rida. He had only the title. The war had swept everything else out, but he seemed to be engaged in something that brought him in a revenue. Some trade, some business, some devilry—the *concierge* put out his hands—one did not know. Nobility was in all sorts of ventures nowadays.

So the schoolmaster and the prison-director theory had to be abandoned.

Randolph kept the man under his eye and he was rewarded with something further. The Baron walked in the garden before the hotel after his dinner bareheaded with a cigarette, and presently the big young man whom Randolph had seen come out of the gate joined him. He was not in evening dress. He wore the same exaggerated foreign clothes, but that something racially familiar seemed now more conspicuous. They appeared to be taking up some unended controversy.

But they were too distant for Randolph to hear any word, or even to discover the language. The younger man seemed to insist on something and the Baron to deny it, to evade it, to put it off. It was amazing how the intent of the conversation seemed to reach Randolph, although he could hear no word. He was perfectly certain that the young man was determinedly insisting on something and that the Baron was trying to turn this intention aside. But it seemed to Randolph that the aged man would not succeed; that he weakened, that whatever the matter was, in the end he would consent to it. The controversy went on until the men had passed out of view in the garden of the hotel.

Randolph returned to his room and his position at the window, with his chin in his hands.

This controversy surely was somehow related to the girl. And suddenly the veins in his body stretched with heat. He could see the face of the young man better. He had close-cropped, bristling black hair, shaggy eyebrows, a thick nose, and a heavy jaw; a determined, dangerous beast, Randolph thought.

What did he want? What did the whole inexplicable tangle mean?

Then for a week nothing happened. The statement is hardly accurate, for suddenly Randolph had a consuming interest in life. His walks were now on the summit of the hill behind Geneva. He knew every detail of the wall around the grounds of the villa on the old abandoned road. He was somewhere on the slope of that hill every afternoon, and there was always some part of the wall of the villa under his eye; but he did not see the girl.

One day as he walked in the abandoned road a woman suddenly appeared before the gate and looked at him. She had the heavy, squat figure of a peasant. Her shoulders were a little humped. She stood without a sound and regarded him intently. Randolph continued along the road as though he were one of the innumerable curious visitors to be found in any foreign city, and the woman did not speak to him although she continued to look at him.

The next morning he was crossing the bridge over the Rhone. He had discovered that he could see a part of the villa from a point on the opposite shore of the lake. Midway across the bridge someone, coming up behind him, spoke. He turned about to find himself in the presence of the woman whom he had seen before the gate of the villa. The woman at once saw that he did not catch the meaning of her words. She seemed greatly perplexed. She went on speaking rapidly and gesticulating with her hands.

There was something which she wished to say to him and he did not understand it!

She walked along beside him, across the Rhone. She seemed to refuse to believe that he did not understand, and she appeared undecided about what she ought to do. She started to return, then she stopped; finally she came back, took him by the arm, and led him into a little shop. She spoke to the shopkeeper.

The man had a few words of English and he was able to make Randolph understand. Someone wanted to see him, but there seemed to be a good deal of difficulty about the place and the place was important. There was not to be any mistake about it. Finally the little shopkeeper made him understand it was a place toward Ferney; it was a place to which he had been; a place where he had met someone before; a first time by accident. The date for the meeting was easy; the shopkeeper showed it to him on the dial of the clock.

At three Randolph was in the wood of the valley of the Jura. He had taken some precautions about it, for such precautions seemed to be urged in the message which he could only receive in fragmentary detail. He went out to Ferney on the tram, made a *détour* around the Château, across the fields, and entered the wood from the direction of the Jura.

He was early, but the girl was already in the path when he arrived.

He could see her from some distance through the leaves, and he found his heart racing, his blood quickened, every sense alert. She came toward him when he approached and put out her hands. And the man could not escape from the illusion that he had come on some sylvan creature of the wood. She wore the same simple, severe frock as of the uniform of a convent, but no severity of costume could mar the exquisite

beauty of the girl. The very plainness of it seemed to enhance that beauty.

"My friend," she said, "I have a thing to tell you. Let us sit down somewhere."

The French border touched the edge of this wood, and Randolph remembered that there was a little shelter which the Swiss guards had made. It was a shed of planted twigs opening to the south. There was a seat of the same planted twigs covered with dry leaves. He knew the path to it.

And he kept hold of the girl's hand as though to guide her, but it was not a sense of guiding her that induced the act. It was the fear that he might lose her, that she might escape from him.

In the last week he had always a haunting sense of loss. He seemed to have discovered this girl on the highways of adventure like the Arabian Prince in the fabled story, who, cracking a roc's egg, found a woman sleeping within it.

They sat together in the little shelter which the Swiss guards had raised against the wind.

The whole valley was awash in sunlight, innumerable larks were at their invisible chorus, but to Randolph it might all have been walled out and silent. He saw only the girl who trembled a little beside him and heard only her voice labouring with the precise English words, hurriedly, in the long explanation. She seemed far away and unreal, but the hand that he held, that he kept desperately in his own, bridged a way. It seemed to bridge the way to everything that remained worth while in the world. Outside of it, there was nothing worth a thought, worth the labour of a motion. And he listened to what the girl said, tense, with every instinct alert.

She was in danger, in very great danger, and she must get away; she must escape. She had it all planned. The old nurse, whom he had seen, who had come to him, had thought the matter out. She would get into France; the two would go as peasants. There was a cart and every arrangement made. But she could not take anything and there were some things which she must have. They could get into Paris in this way, but they would have absolutely nothing there. They would not be safe in Europe. They wanted to go to England.

She hurried with this part of the story, and when Randolph tried to reply she stopped him. She knew what he was going to say. But she could not permit it, she would not permit it. They could not take anything from him; besides, she had enough if it were sold to make them independent.

Then she hesitated.

He must not ask who she was, just now, but she was a person connected with the destiny of a country; she had been smuggled out of the country and kept here. It was all the doing of the Baron Rida and other conspirators of the country she belonged to. They considered her a dangerous element to the new Government. She must be got rid of—not murder—she did not mean that, but got rid of by a marriage that would make her impossible. That was the plan. He had seen the man with the Baron Rida—a hideous person, but a Prince in a little Balkan kingdom. This was the thing that she must escape from now, at once!

Immediately the whole mystery cleared.

Randolph understood now what the Baron Rida had to do with it; the girl's fear of him; this heated controversy that seemed to go on between the Baron and the young man whom he had seen come out of the gate to the villa.

Again he tried to interrupt the girl, but she went on; she would not listen to him. But she found herself embarrassed when she undertook to explain what it was that she expected to sell in Paris; what it was from which she would get the money to take her to England. It was all very valuable. It would bring a very large sum of money, but she could not take it with her. She hesitated.

"I don't know how to tell you, my friend!"

She paused and her colour deepened.

"I must appear an ordinary person outside; but underneath they permit me to be what I am."

Then swiftly she put up her hand to her throat, undid the buttons of her blouse, and turned to Randolph.

He saw a film of exquisite lace—lace made by spiders—unequalled, priceless. The tips of her decided fingers held it out toward him, spreading the minute meshes of the lace, and he saw a crown worked delicately in purple.

The girl stammered like one determined to get through with an explanation at any cost.

"It's all like that—all—all over!"

She continued breathlessly.

"And I have a great deal of it. It is the finest lace in the world. It could be sold in Paris, and I would have a little fortune. But I cannot take it. We must go as peasants, and peasants could not have a bundle of this sort."

To Randolph the girl seemed shimmering in a nimbus. He could not, for his life, fix her with things real. She came forth from haze, from shadow, like those fairy women drawn by painters to represent what the heart of man eternally longs for.

She went on hurriedly, a little incoherent:—

"I thought perhaps you would help me. Perhaps you would take these things for me and—and in Paris I could sell them to a shop. Old Marta will bring them to your hotel."

The girl, straight, slim, lithe and beautiful as a naiad, her cloudy hair banked around her face, belonged to sacred groves—to ancient sequestered places—one of those alluring, mysterious fairy women of which the fable in every tongue remains.

And the man seemed enveloped by the sorcery of this illusion. For a moment he did not move and he remained silent. Then he got slowly to his feet. He carried the hand imprisoned in his fingers to his lips; he pressed it, crushed it against his mouth.

"I love you!" he said; "I love you—I love you!"

As though these words were an answer; an answer in every way; in every direction.

The girl stood up also, her eyes wide, her lips parted.

"No, no," she said, "you must not; it is impossible. You don't understand!"

Randolph put up his free hand and brushed away something that seemed to cling to his face, as though he would get a steadier vision.

"I shall take you away," he said; "nothing shall hurt you—you shall go with me."

A vague terror spread over the girl's face.

"Oh, no, no," she cried; "they would kill you!"

The man released her hand and stood out a step beyond her in the evening sun.

"Kill me!" he repeated, as though the suggestion were something inconceivably absurd; as though he possessed some divine immunity from danger and the strength of the immortals. And in truth there were physical evidences for this belief. The man was hardened by rain and sun. He looked like a bronze form from some forgotten foundry by the Arns. He was big and young, but the perfect proportions of his body dispelled the impression of bulk.

"'I SHALL TAKE YOU AWAY,' HE SAID; 'NOTHING SHALL HURT YOU—YOU SHALL GO WITH ME.' A VAGUE TERROR SPREAD OVER THE GIRL'S FACE."

The girl looked at him for a moment in a sort of wonder. Then her eyes filled, and her voice hesitated and faltered.

"Oh, my friend," she said, "you do not understand—please do—only—only what I ask."

The man, in his determined posture, seemed to reflect.

"I will take what you send," he said, "if you will see me again for a moment, somewhere to-night."

A voice interrupted them, a voice singing the light aria of an opera. The voice was advancing on the path toward the shelter of the Swiss guards in which they had been sitting. Randolph turned, waiting with his arms folded for the singer to appear; his face like metal, his eyes steady under narrowed lids. But the singer did not come into the open, at the turn of the path he plunged into the wood. Randolph was not conscious of a sound beside him while the menace threatened, but when he turned the girl had vanished; he caught a glimpse of her slim figure in the fringe of wood toward Geneva.

He returned slowly to the city like a man walking in a dream. He went up to his room in the hotel and sat down again in the old posture of reflection: his elbows on the window-sill, his chin propped up by his clenched hand. The man's face retained its firm cast; the jaw lean and hard, its contour outlined as with a chisel.

He had gone headlong into an amazing adventure. The intrigue of an Empire now involved him. And within him great, primitive

emotions struggled to their feet. All at once he had become a factor in great affairs. But the huge, dormant emotions had not awaked at this call. They moved under a simpler stimulus. This girl was in danger, the direct danger that could menace a woman—and he loved her! Loved her!

How far below this thing lay the old admiration for Edith Marshall! How far below it lay the mere pleasure in a woman's companionship, the mere sense of being pleased with her! These things were idle impressions. But this new thing was a dynamic force, like the energy that turned the earth on its axis. For it seemed to Randolph that this girl was a part of him, a part of every nerve, every blood drop, every fragment of his flesh; and at the door of life, by some divine surgery, she had been dissected out of his body. And this love—vague, inadequate word—this love, was the wild, urgent, overpowering cry of elements, torn asunder at the beginning of things to be rejoined.

The pressure of the whole mysterious affair seemed against him like a moving shoulder. Some authority behind the machinery of the world, acting on a design inscrutable, had brought him to this girl; and therefore—he reasoned like every lover—by the grant of that authority she belonged to him.

He thrilled under the proprietary word.

And this beast—the picture of the big evil-faced young man, turning in at the gate to the villa; appeared vividly before him in the frame of the window—this beast!

Randolph drew in his breath through the set teeth until his whole body lifted with the pressure.

At this moment someone knocked on the door. Evening was descending. The twilight of the Swiss mountains was on Lake Leman. It entered the room like sunlight behind a sapphire window. The knocking continued. Randolph finally rose and opened the door.

The old peasant woman entered with a laundry basket. The basket was big and heavy. She put it down and handed Randolph a bit of crumpled paper concealed in her hand. Then she went out and closed the door behind her. Randolph unrolled the paper by the window. There were a few words in English written delicately.

"Come to the plane-tree by the villa wall at midnight."

Instantly the man changed. Energy appeared behind his determined face. Some plan, heretofore lacking a vital element, was now complete. He took his hat and went out of the hotel.

After dinner Randolph paid his bill, then he went to his room to prepare for his journey. He had arranged to send his heavy luggage to Paris by *grande vitesse*, but for the others he had purchased a big leather bag. He got the trunk ready and turned it over to the *concierge*. Then he locked the door, opened the leather bag, and carried the big laundry basket into the middle of the room beside it.

He removed the coarse bath-towel tucked in carefully over the top of the basket and lifted out its contents. There were package after package of neatly folded articles, all of that exquisite priceless lace which he had seen for a moment on the girl's bosom; everything for the elaborate trousseau of a fairy empress. For surely only fairy fingers could have woven stuff like this.

He stood over the heaps of lace fascinated by its beauty.

He looked for the tiny crown worked in purple silk, but he found it only on the first bit of lingerie at the top of the basket. And it occurred to Randolph that it had been removed from the others for safety, but left on this single piece for him. He took up the dainty elaborate thing and pressed it to his lips.

And Nature, that great enchantress, that subtle guardian of life, that divine fakir, squatting on her carpet in the sun, tempted him with pictures of vivid, intoxicating detail; whispered and suggested, stretching her lures, cunning as a spider, across the doorposts of every sense.

Then, as with a mad energy, he tumbled the whole mass of laces into the bag; put in some articles of his own and strapped the bag together.

At eleven he left the hotel for the railway station, the bag beside him in the carriage. But it was not by train that he intended to go to Paris on this night. He took the bag into the station at one door and brought it out at another. A big limousine motor waited at this entrance, as he had arranged, to travel all night, for two hundred francs paid down in gold at the Garage de Swiss by the Rhone bridge.

He gave a direction to the driver, got in with the bag, and drew the curtains. The motor took the road over the ridge toward Ferney. On the other side it turned sharp to the right and crept carefully through narrow ways to the end of the abandoned road leading to the mysterious villa.

Randolph got out. He knew where the plane-tree stood; minutely he knew every foot of the wall. The tree was beyond the iron gate where the old road was open to the sky. And now a great wheel of a moon illuminated it. It was filled with white light, vivid, as under a fairy sun. But the wall was in shadow appearing blacker by the contrast.

There was a crook in the bole of the tree where it writhed out of the masonry, and by standing on this Randolph was entirely hidden and his head was only a little way below the top of the wall. The road behind him was as light as day, but under the foliage and vines the top of the wall was like the pit. He could not see anything. It was as though he looked into a dungeon.

For some moments after Randolph stepped up into this darkness there was no sound. Then something moved on the top of the wall in the darkness above him, and he felt two hands feeling gently for his face. They found it and lifted it a little; the soft palms and the moving fingers carried the subtleties of a caress.

He did not move, and a voice, broken, unsteady, whispered above him.

"Oh, my friend," it said. "Go away, go away quickly. Leave the basket, as it is, at the hotel—old Marta will bring it away. Do not touch it—have nothing to do with it!"

"SOMETHING LIKE THE SWIFT, CLEAN IMPACT OF A DRIVING-ROD LANDED AGAINST HIS CHEST."

And as the voice went on something like a drop of rain fell on the man's face; another, and another.

"How could I know it would be *you*," the thin, sobbing voice whispered. "I knew it would be someone, but oh, oh, how could I know it would be *you!*"

The soft hands fingered about the man's face. Then the voice went on a little closer to him.

"Go away, go away quickly, now, to-night." Then the tense voice seemed to stutter. "But oh! my—my friend; you will not forget me? Wherever you go, whatever you do, you will not forget me? You will keep me in your heart, always, for ever?—say it—whisper it to me."

The man's face was wet. He had not moved and he had not uttered a sound. Now suddenly with a swift motion he put up his hands and lifted the girl clear of the wall. She came down with a cry into his arms.

"Oh, God help us!"

It was an invocation to the immensity beyond our wills.

But it was a prayer, it seemed, not likely to be answered.

As Randolph stepped down into the light he saw the big, evil-featured young man. He stood just below in the road. Instantly, with an oath, strangely like the language of the Bowery, the creature charged, his head crouched, his fists doubled.

Randolph put the girl down and turned back. The big young man in the momentum of his rush got the surprise of a lifetime. Something like the swift, clean impact of a driving-rod landed against his chest; it lifted him on to the tips of his toes, turned him round two or three times, and pitched him over against the wall. He staggered, putting out his hands to support himself; his back to the wall, his contorted face toward Randolph. Then he began to curse, and

among the oaths the American-English of the Bowery tough was unmistakable.

"Why, damn—damn—you! You're just a goat. The bunch picked you up for a sucker; they're lace smugglers. They wanted you to carry the stuff across the line!"

He spat violently as though ejecting something viscous in his mouth.

"It was a deuce of a nice little arrangement. But there was a joker in it—the joker was me. I'm a-goin' to pull the thing off. I'm a-goin' to make it come true. The old Dago's a crook, but the girl's on the level and I'm going to have her."

He tried the rush again, and he got precisely the same result; except that this time the impact of the driving-rod was squarely on the angle of the jaw and it came with all the weight of Randolph's body behind it.

The big young man seemed to slide gently down the long slope of the road. He turned gently over, and remained, as in a careless posture of fatigue, motionless.

The girl had remained where Randolph put her down; her arms hanging, her lips parted, her hair clouding her face.

He caught her up, without a word, and crossed, with great strides, to the car at the end of the road. He gave a direction to the driver, got in, and closed the door. The big limousine slipped through the tangle of lanes and raced on the great road toward Paris.

And in the swinging car, in the long night, in the darkness, imprisoned in Randolph's arms, the girl tried to speak, to whisper, to explain. Her uncle, ruined by the war, had drafted herself and her fortune into this venture. He had hired the American crook and staged the thing here in Geneva. The laces were in truth her own since they were purchased with her money. She had not thought of the wrong in the thing. It seemed a sort of lark, a bit of idle comedy.

But it was a fragmentary and unfinished explanation.

The girl's mouth was requisitioned to another service.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 48.

Now is the former; half a year
Must pass, and latter will be here.

1. The gun and proverb seem to state
That something should be very great.

2. Of anagram of knight and gum
Headless let modern name become.

3. Take less than half, and with it write:
What is required is now in sight.

4. In two directions he is found:
The demonstration must be sound.

5. Divide the glass, put this between
The pieces and a girl is seen.

6. What may be yours or his is changed
To mine by being rearranged.

7. Her diet would suggestive seem
Of Eastern race and English stream.

8. Take two from one, and four remain,
A palindrome becoming plain.

9. He tells us what the world may think,
And is not unconcerned with drink.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 48 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on July 9th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

With their answers to this acrostic, solvers must send also their real names and addresses.

ANSWER TO No. 46.

1. B	ournemout	H
2. L	entand	O
3. E	nd	U
4. A	ugustu	S
5. K	nav	E

NOTES.—Light 1. Contains *Nemo*, nobody. 2. Lent is fast time; lentando, becoming slow. 3. Enduring. 4. Augustus Cæsar, August.

ANSWER TO No. 47.

1. P	eppe	R
2. E	sp	O
3. N	inn	Y
4. N	irvan	A
5. Y	el	L

NOTES.—Proem. Pennyroyal is a species of Mint. Light 1. Pepper's ghost. 2. Espouse. 3. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, iii., 1. Light 4. Sanskrit, a blowing out. 5. Shetland island.

POETIC JUSTICE.

By STEPHEN McKENNA.

Illustrated by H. M. Bateman.

I.

THE blow fell without warning, and a typewritten notice informed the Poet that the Cabinet Committee on Accommodation required the tiny, threadbare chambers in Stafford's Inn, where he had lived unobtrusively for seven happy, insolvent years.

"'There was no worth in the fashion; there was no wit in the plan,'" murmured the Poet. The rooms were too small even for a Deputy-Director-General, and he knew that not one of the silk-stockinged, short-skirted, starling-voiced young women, with bare arms and regimental badges, who acted as secretaries to Deputy-Director-Generals, would consent to walk up four flights of creaking, uncarpeted stairs to the dusty sparrows' nest on the housetop that was his home.

For a while he scented a vendetta, but—deleterious poetry apart—he had injured no man, and the *personnel* of the Cabinet Committee was as little known to him as his poetry to the Cabinet Committee. In general, too, he was the object of a certain popularity and pitying regard; the Millionaire sent him presents of superfluous game each year, the Iron King invited him at short notice to make a fourteenth at dinner, and the Official Receiver unloaded six bottles of sample port wine when the Poet succumbed to his annual bronchitis. Even the notice of eviction was politely worded and regretful; it was also uncompromising in spirit, and the Poet made his hurried way to four house-agents. No sooner had he stated his requirements to be a bed-sitting-room (with use of bath) within the four-mile radius, than all four agents offered him a Tudor manor-house in Westmorland; further, they refused to offer him anything else, but on his own initiative he discovered a studio in Glebe Place and a service-flat in Victoria Street.

"I saw in the paper that you'd been turned out," said the Millionaire that night, when the Poet trudged home, footsore and fretful, to find his chambers occupied by the Iron King, the Private Secretary, the Lexicographer, the Military Attaché, and their friends. "What are you going to do about it?" he continued, with the relentlessness of a man who likes a prompt decision, even if it be a wrong one. "You know nothing about business, I'm sure; leases, premiums, insurance, all that sort of thing. You're in a hole; I don't see what more there is to be said."

So far the Poet, his mind wavering wearily between Glebe Place and Victoria Street, had said nothing; he turned silently to the Iron King, wondering how, without being rude, to indicate his desire for bed.

"I saw rather a decent place that might suit you," drawled the Private Secretary, smoothing a wrinkle out of his shapely silk socks. "It's next to my Chief's in Belgrave Square. Of course, I don't know what rent they want for it."

The Iron King shook his head.

"He couldn't afford it," he said, speaking through and round and over the Poet. "Now I'm told that there are some very comfortable and cheap boarding-houses near Kensington Palace Gardens."

The Poet drew the cork of a fresh bottle of whisky, and collected four unbroken tumblers, a pewter mug, and two breakfast cups without handles. As so often before, his destiny seemed to be slipping out of his control into the hands of the practical, strong-voiced men who filled his sitting-room to overflowing and would not let him go to bed. The Military Attaché knew of a maisonnette in Albemarle Street; the Official Receiver had been recently brought into professional contact with a fine Georgian property in Buckinghamshire, where they could all meet for a week-end game of golf at Stoke Poges. Somewhere in Chelsea—not Glebe Place—the Lexicographer had seen just the thing, if only he could be quite sure about the drains. With loud cheerfulness they accepted the Millionaire's postulate that the Poet knew nothing of business; unselfishly they placed all their experience and preferences at his disposal.

"Of course, there's the servant problem," an undistinguishable voice remarked two hours later; and the Poet, settling to an uneasy sleep in his chair, mentally ruled out the Chelsea studio.

"The ordinary surveyor's no use," broke in the Lexicographer, pursuing his own line of

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thought. "What you want is a drainage expert."

"I know these good, honest, middle-aged couples," cried the Iron King, with the bitterness of an oft-defrauded widower. "The woman always drinks, and the man always steals the cigars."

"I have nothing but gas in my place," said the decorous voice of the Private Secretary, "and I have it on pretty good authority that there'll be a great coal shortage this winter. I don't want that to go any further, though."

The Millionaire rose to his feet with a yawn.

"He must get an experienced woman-friend to help him with things like carpets and curtains," he ordained, with mellow benevolence. "When my wife comes back from Wales—— How soon do you have to turn out, Poet?"

The Poet woke with a start and looked at the clock. The time was a quarter to two, and he still wanted to go to bed.

"Ten days," he murmured, drowsily.

"Jove! You haven't much time," said the Millionaire. "Now, look here; the one thing *not* to do is to be in a hurry. Any place you take now will probably have to serve you for several years, and you'll find moving a lot more expensive than you think. If you can get some kind of shake-down for a few days"—he turned expansively to his friends—"we may be able to give you a few hints."

The Poet became suddenly wakeful and alert.

"Do I understand that you're offering me a bed until you find me permanent quarters?" he inquired, with slow precision.

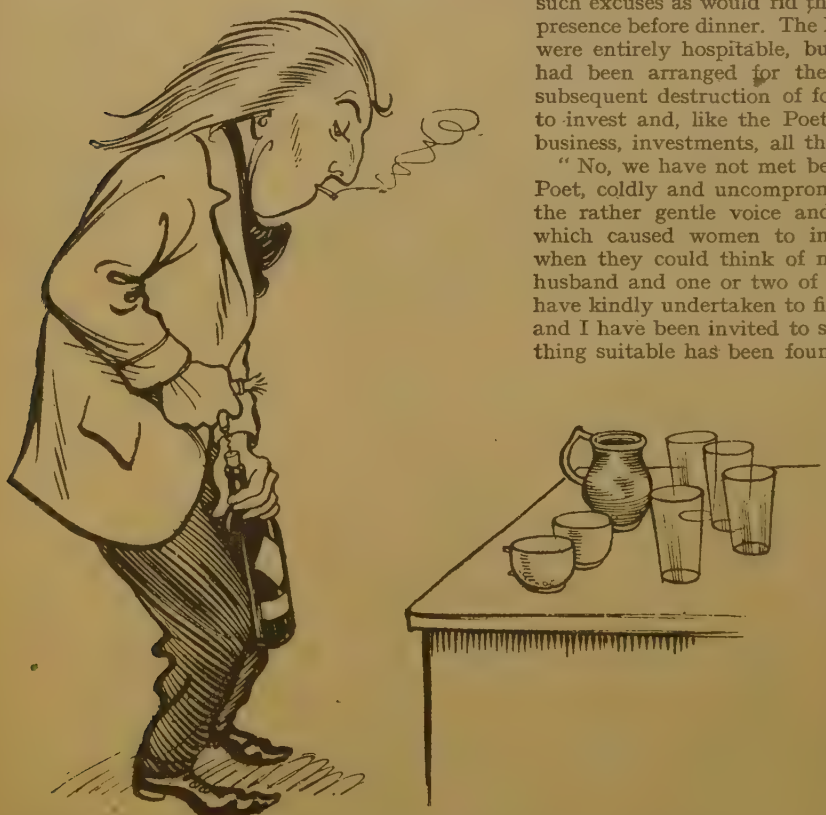
"Er—yes," said the Millionaire, a little blankly.

"Thank you," answered the Poet, simply. "I say, d'you men mind if I turn you out now? It's rather late, and I haven't been sleeping very well."

II.

A WEEK later the Poet walked up Park Lane, followed by an elderly man trundling two compressed cane trunks on a barrow with a loose wheel. It was a radiant summer afternoon, and taxis stood idle in long ranks when they were not drawing in to the kerb with winning gestures. The Poet, however, wished to make his arrival dramatic, and it was dramatic enough to make the Millionaire's butler direct him to the tradesmen's entrance, while the Millionaire, remembering little but suspecting all, hurried away by a side door, leaving a message that he was out of England for the duration of the war. The lot fell on the Millionaire's wife to invent such excuses as would rid the house of the Poet's presence before dinner. The Millionaire's instincts were entirely hospitable, but that night's party had been arranged for the entertainment and subsequent destruction of four men with money to invest and, like the Poet, "no knowledge of business, investments, all that sort of thing."

"No, we have not met before," explained the Poet, coldly and uncompromisingly, abandoning the rather gentle voice and caressing manners which caused women to invite him to dinner when they could think of no one else. "Your husband and one or two of our common friends have kindly undertaken to find me new quarters, and I have been invited to stay here until something suitable has been found."



"THE POET DREW THE CORK OF A FRESH BOTTLE OF WHISKY, AND COLLECTED FOUR UNBROKEN TUMBLERS, A PEWTER MUG, AND TWO BREAKFAST CUPS WITHOUT HANDLES."

There was silence for a few moments, and the Millionaire's wife looked apprehensively at the clock, while the Poet laid the foundations of a malignantly substantial tea.

"H-how far have you got at present?" she asked, with an embarrassed laugh.

"Your husband told me to leave it to him," answered the Poet, "and I've left it to him. There was a general feeling that I didn't know

what I wanted—house or flat, north or south of the Park, all the rest of it; they said there would be a scandal if I employed a young maid, I couldn't afford two, and an old one would pawn my clothes to buy gin. I am quoting your husband now; I know nothing of business. Everyone agreed, too, that I must have a drain of some kind. Would you say it took long to find a bed-sitting-room with use of bath?"

The Millionaire's wife hurriedly pushed back her chair.

"My husband's going abroad for the duration of the war," she said, in loyal explanation, "but it's just possible that he hasn't started yet."

The Millionaire, returning on tip-toe from the loft over the garage, had sought asylum in the library, where he was smoking a cigar and reading the evening paper. As his wife entered he looked up with welcoming expectancy.

"How did you get rid of him?" he asked.

The Millionaire's wife pressed her hands to her temples.

"My dear! What *have* you been promising him?" she cried.

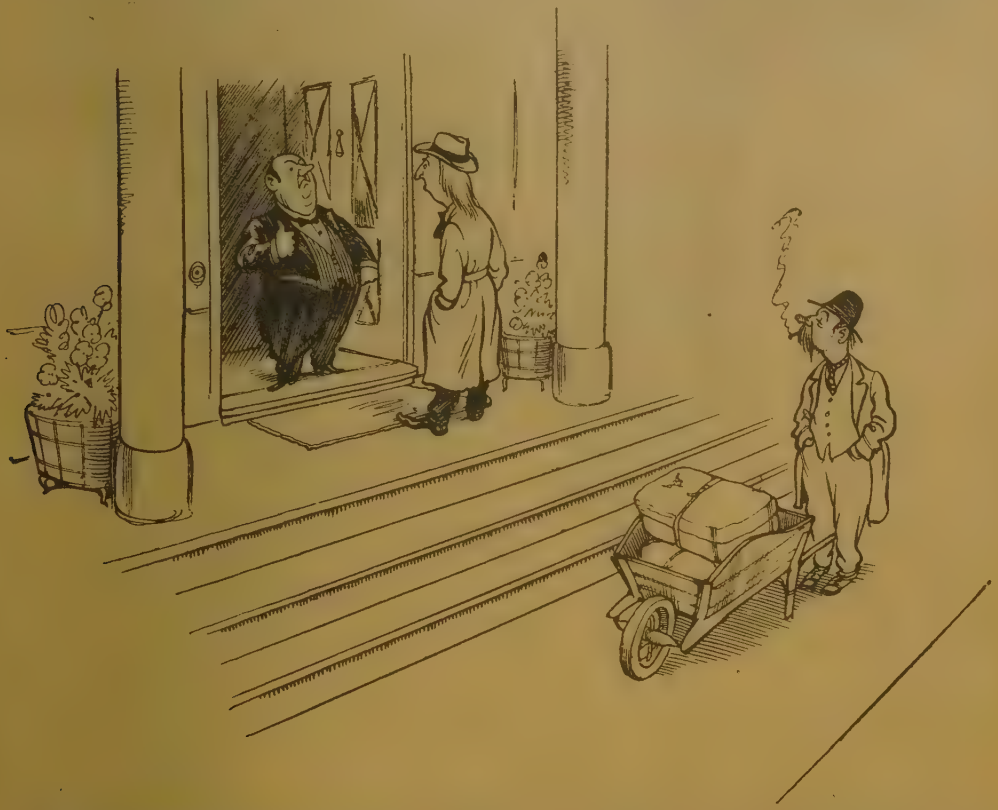
The Millionaire swore softly, as the truth sank into his brain.

"Have another place laid for dinner," he ordered; "book two seats for a music-hall and take him out to supper afterwards. I can't afford to be disturbed to-night. To-morrow I must get in touch with the Iron King. I don't see what more there is to be said."

Four weeks later the Poet drove in a six-cylinder car from Park Lane to Eaton Square on an indeterminate visit to the Iron King. He was looking better for the month's good wine and food, in which the Millionaire's house abounded; but now the Millionaire, who based his fortune on knowing the right people in every walk of life, was arranging to have his house taken over by the Red Cross authorities. In a week's time the house was to be found unsuitable and restored to him, but henceforth the Iron King was to have the honour of entertaining the Poet.

"How you ever came to make such a promise!" wailed the Millionaire's wife, for the twentieth time, as they drove to Claridge's. "London's so full that you might have known it's impossible to get *any*thing."

"I feel that we have exhausted this subject," answered the Millionaire, with the brusqueness of a man whose nerves have worn thin; with the menace, too, of one who, having divorced his first wife, would divorce the second on small provocation.



"THE POET, HOWEVER, WISHED TO MAKE HIS ARRIVAL DRAMATIC, AND IT WAS DRAMATIC ENOUGH TO MAKE THE MILLIONAIRE'S BUTLER DIRECT HIM TO THE TRADESMEN'S ENTRANCE."

The Iron King was not at home when the Poet arrived in Eaton Square, but a pretty young secretary, cultured to the point of transforming all her final "g's" into "k's," received him with every mark of welcome. She admired the Iron King romantically, and was in the habit of writing his surname after her own Christian name to see how the combination looked; and, when he had departed each morning to contest his latest assessment for excess profits, she would wander through the house, planning little changes in the arrangement of the furniture and generally deploring the sober, colourless taste of the first Iron Queen. So far, her employer returned none of her admiration. He addressed her loosely as "Miss—er" and forgot her name; he never noticed what clothes she was wearing or the pretty dimples that she made by holding down the inside flesh of her cheeks between her eye-teeth; further, he criticized her spelling spitefully, and, on the occasion of the Millionaire's second marriage, had dictated a savage half-sheet, beginning: "A young man may marry once, as he may get drunk once, without the world thinking much the worse of him; habitual intemperance is, on first principles, to be deplored."

The pretty young secretary knew from fiction and the drama that the Iron King would never appreciate her until he stood in danger of losing her. She welcomed the Poet as a foil, and misquoted his poetry twice before tea was over; then she invited him to accompany her to a picture palace, but the Poet, once inside the citadel, was reluctant to leave it until his position was more firmly established.

Securely entrenched at Claridge's, the Millionaire telephoned derisively to the City, so that the Iron King returned home half an hour before his usual time, prepared to deal with the Poet as he dealt with querulous or inquisitive shareholders at general meetings. The Poet, however, was long and painfully accustomed to combat with enraged editors, and lost no time in assuming the offensive, demanding indignantly in a high head-voice, before the Iron King had crossed his own threshold, why no quarters had been found for him and how much longer anyone imagined that he would put up with the indignity of being bandied from one wretched house to another.

The flushed cheeks and hysterical manner put the Iron King temporarily out of countenance.

"My dear fellow!" he interrupted, ingratiatingly.

"I'm not a business man," continued the Poet, hotly. "You all of you told me that, and I'm disposed to say: 'Thank God, I'm not!'"

The Iron King put his hat carefully out of reach and forced a smile.

"You mustn't take it like that, old chap," he said, soothingly. "I—we—all of us are doing our best. Now we won't bother about dressing; let's go straight in and thrash the thing out over a bottle of wine."

Instructing his butler very audibly to open a bottle of the 1906 Lanson, he slipped his arm through the Poet's and led him, sullenly murmuring, into the dining-room. With the second bottle of champagne his guest ceased to be aggrieved and became quarrelsome; when the port wine appeared, he had the Iron King cowed and broken in *moral*.

"If you find fault with everything, why do you come here, why stay here?" complained the Iron King, with a last flickering effort to recover his independence.

"Why don't you find me some other place to go to, as you *promised?*" the Poet retorted, as he made his way to the morning-room, and sat down to order a month's supply of underclothes from his hosier.

III.

THE Iron King always boasted that honesty was the best policy and that he was invariably willing to put his cards on the table. The Millionaire had once professed himself likely to be satisfied if the Iron King would only remove the fifth ace from his sleeve, and a certain coolness between the two men resulted. In general, however, he had the reputation of a frank, bluff fellow.

On the morrow of the Poet's arrival he remained in bed, and announced in the quavering pencil-strokes of a sick man that he was suffering from anthrax, which, he might add, was not only painful but infectious. The Poet scrawled across one corner of the note that anthrax was usually fatal, but that, as he himself had twice had it, he would risk taking it a third time in order to be with his friend. Thereupon the Iron King departed to the City, leaving the Poet to dictate blank verse to the pretty young secretary, who curled both feet round one leg of her chair, told him that she "loved his potry more'n anythink she'd ever read," and asked how all the hard words like "chrysoprase" and "asphodel" were spelt. That night a telegram arrived shortly before dinner, and the Iron King announced that the Ministry of Munitions was sending him to America to stabilize iron prices.

"Why can't you finish one thing before starting another?" demanded the Poet, hectoringly. "You haven't *yet* found me any quarters, and you call yourself a business man. I shall, of course, stay on here till your return."

The Iron King shook his head gravely.

"That's impossible," he interrupted. "My young secretary——"

"You must take her with you," answered the Poet, obstinately.

The subject was not pursued, but at bedtime the Iron King roundly asked the Poet how much he would take to go away.

"I require a home," answered the Poet, frigidly, remembering the weary day spent by him in discovering the Glebe Place studio and the weary night spent by the Iron King in recommending Kensington boarding-houses. "I do not want your money."

"We sha'n't fall out over a pound or two," urged the Iron King, with a meaning motion of the hand towards his breast-pocket.

"A thing is either a promise or it is not a promise," replied the Poet, as he turned on

his heel. "I know nothing of business, or what people are pleased to term 'commercial morality.'"

Four weeks later the Poet left Eaton Square for the Private Secretary's rooms in Bury Street. He looked thin and anæmic after his month of privations, for the Iron King, improving in *moral* and recapturing something of the old strike-breaking spirit, had counter-attacked on the third day of the Poet's visit. The chauffeur, butler, and two footmen, all of military age, had been claimed on successive appeals as indispensable, but on their last appearance at the Tribunal the Iron King had unprotestingly presented them to the Army. This he followed by breakfasting in bed, lunching in the City, dining at his club, and leaving neither instructions nor money for the maintenance of the household. For a time the Poet was saved from the greater starvation by the care of the pretty young secretary, but without an Iron King there was no need for a foil. Sharp words were exchanged one morning over the propriety of grounds in coffee; the pretty young secretary declared that she would "have nothink more to do with him or his old potry"; and in the afternoon he packed his trunks with his own hands and with his own hands dragged them downstairs on to the pavement, leaving the pretty young secretary biting viciously at the corner of a crumpled handkerchief drenched in "White Rose."

The Private Secretary received him in a manner different from that adopted by either the Millionaire or the Iron King. The two men were of nearly the same age, but in a deferential, if misspent, life the Private Secretary had learned to be non-committal. Well he knew that he had but one bedroom; well he knew that, on admitting it, the Poet would claim it from him.

"A spare bed?" he echoed, when the Poet dragged his trunks into the middle of a tiny sitting-room. "Really, I have no statement to make."

"At least, you will not deny," said the Poet, with truculent emphasis, "that you undertook to find me suitable accommodation and to supply me with a bed until it was found."

"I must refer you to the reply given to a similar question on the twenty-third ultimo," answered the Private Secretary, loftily. For a rich reward he could not have said where he had been or what he had done on the twenty-third ultimo, but to the Poet the reply was new and disconcerting.

"Where's my flat, anyway?" he pursued, doggedly.

"I have no statement to make," reiterated the Private Secretary.

After an awkward silence, during which neither yielded an inch of ground, the Poet dragged his trunks destructively downstairs and drove to the flat of the Official Receiver. Glowing with the consciousness of victory, the Private Secretary dressed for dinner and started out to his club. His good-humour was impaired, when he observed in his hall a pendant triangle

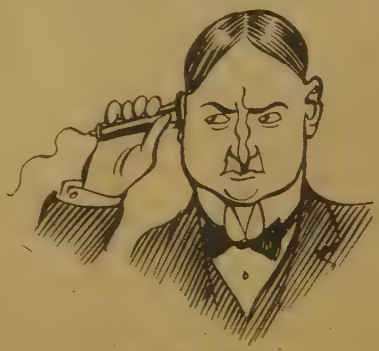
"THEREUPON THE IRON KING DEPARTED TO THE CITY, LEAVING THE POET TO DICTATE BLANK VERSE TO THE PRETTY YOUNG SECRETARY."

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY DRAWLED A FRIENDLY WARNING BY TELEPHONE TO—

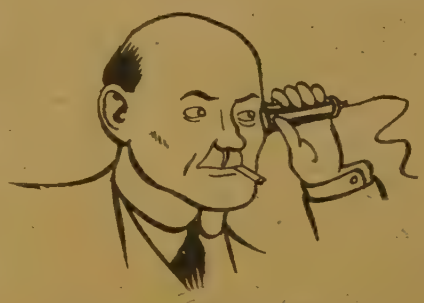
of wall-paper flapping in the draught of the open door through which the Poet had dragged his trunks. Farther on, the paint was scarred on the stairs, and the carpet of the main hall was rucked and disordered; there was also a lingering suggestion of escaping gas, and the Private Secretary observed a bracket hanging at a bibulous angle.

"This," he murmured, through grimly-set teeth, "is sheer frightfulness."

Returning to his rooms, he drawled a friendly warning by telephone to the Millionaire, who instantly gave orders that no one of any sex or age was to be admitted. Next he called up the Iron King and repeated the warning; then the Lexicographer, the Official Receiver, and the Military Attaché were similarly placed on their guard, and there was nothing to do but to proceed to his belated dinner.



THE MILLIONAIRE.



NEXT HE CALLED UP THE IRON KING—

The Great War, which had converted staff officers into popular preachers, novelists into strategical experts, and everyone else into a Minister of the Crown, had left the Poet (in name, at least) a poet and in nothing else anything at all. He acted precisely as the Private Secretary had intended him to act, driving first to the Lexicographer's house, where he was greeted by a suspiciously new "TO LET" board, and thence to the Official Receiver's flat, where a typewritten card informed him that this bell was out of order. Embarrassed, but purposeful, he directed his four-wheeler to Eaton Square, but the blinds were down, and a semblance of mourning draped the Iron King's house. In Park Lane, a twenty-yard expanse of straw, nine inches thick, prayed silence for the Millionaire's quicker recovery.

"I don't know where to go to next," murmured the Poet, dejectedly.

"Well, I'm blest if I do," grumbled the driver. "And it's past my tea-time. Doncher know where yer live?"

"Years ago I had rooms in Stafford's Inn," began the Poet. "Then the Cabinet Committee——"

The cabman descended from his box for a heart-to-heart conversation.

"Now you look 'ere," he said. "I got a boy at 'ome the livin' image of you——"

"But how nice!" interrupted the Poet, wondering apprehensively whether an invitation was on its way to him.

The cabman sniffed.

"Not quite right in 'is 'ead, 'e ain't. *There*fore I don't want to be 'arsh with yer. Jump inside, let me drive yer ter Stafford's Inn, pay me me legal fare, and a bob ter drink yer 'ealth—and we'll say no more abaht it. If yer don't"—he made a threatening gesture towards the Poet's precariously-strapped trunks—"I'll throw the blinkin' lot on ter the pivement and yer can carry 'em 'ome on yer 'ead. See?"

"I couldn't, you know," objected the Poet, gently.

"Jump inside," repeated the cabman.

One hope was as forlorn as another, and the Poet was too sick with hunger to think of resistance. In time the four-wheeler rumbled its way to Stafford's Inn; in time and by force of habit the Poet was mounting the bare, creaking wooden stairs; in time he found himself fitting his unsurrendered latch-key into his abandoned lock.

THEN THE LEXICOGRAPHER—

Beyond an eight weeks' layer of dust on chairs and table, the threadbare rooms were little changed. A loaf of bread, green and furred with mould, lay beside an empty marmalade pot, from which a cloud of flies emerged with angry buzzing; a breakfast cup without a handle completed the furniture of the table, and in the rickety arm-chair was an eight-weeks-old *Morning Post*.

"The Cabinet Committee has neglected its opportunities," grumbled the Poet, surveying with disfavour the dusty, derelict scene.

Then his eye was caught by a long envelope, thrust half-way under the door, from the Cabinet Committee itself. An indecipherable set of initials, later describing itself as his obedient servant, was directed to inform him, on a date two months earlier, that it had been decided

THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER—

not to requisition the offices and chambers of Stafford's Inn. The formal notice was accordingly to be regarded as cancelled.

The Poet, who knew nothing of business, wrote instructing his solicitors to claim for two months' disturbance from the Defence of the Realm Commission on Losses and to include all legal costs in the claim.

IV.

THREE weeks later the Private Secretary was strolling across the Horse Guards Parade on his way to luncheon, when he caught sight of the Poet. Since their last altercation his conscience had been as uneasy as a Private Secretary's conscience can be, and he strove to avoid the meeting. The Poet, however, was full of sunshine and smiles.

"I've not seen you for weeks!" he cried, welcomingly. "How's everybody, and what's everybody doing? Is the Millionaire all right again? I understood he'd been ill."

The Private Secretary eyed his friend suspiciously.

"He has not left his house for three weeks," he answered.

"And the Iron King?"

"He has not either."

The Poet's eyes lit up with dawning comprehension.

"What about the Lexicographer and the Official Receiver?" he asked. "The same? What an infernal nuisance! I wanted to call round and see whether they had got me a flat."

The Private Secretary shook his head.

"It's not the least use," he said, emphatically. "None of them has been outside his front door for three weeks; no one knows when they'll come out again, no one is allowed inside. Last night I had a box given me for the theatre, and I tried to make up a party; all their telephones were disconnected, and when I drove round in person I couldn't even get the bell answered." He paused, and then inquired, carelessly: "By the way, have you got into your new quarters yet? They would be interested to know."

"I haven't got any new quarters," answered the Poet. "You remember that you and the others were going to find them for me. I know nothing of business—and I'm not likely to get new rooms until I see the Millionaire and the Iron King."

At the steps of his club the Private Secretary paused, as though wondering whether to say that the Poet was unlikely to see the Iron King or the Millionaire until he had got his new rooms. This prolonged voluntary self-internment was a source of inconvenience, for, in the peaceful days before the Cabinet Committee on Accommodation had stepped in, there were pleasant

AND THE MILITARY ATTACHÉ WERE PLACED ON THEIR GUARD.

parties in Eaton Square and Park Lane. Now the Private Secretary was reduced to paying for his own dinners more often than was agreeable. He said nothing, however, for fear of concentrating the Poet's fire on himself.

"It must be simply wrecking their business," said the Poet to himself, as he walked to Bedford Row to see how the claim for disturbance was progressing. "It serves them right, though, for talking drains when I wanted to go to bed."

No Bridge Player should miss this article if he wants to play a winning game.

The New System of Calling at Auction Bridge.

By R. F. FOSTER

(*Author of "Advanced Auction Bridge," etc.*).

ALL the latest text-books on the game of auction are practically agreed that the minimum strength that will justify a free bid in a suit is five cards, with two sure tricks at the top, or four very strong cards, such as three top honours, and at least an ace-queen suit, or two kings, on the outside. The three standard combinations at the head of a suit that are worth two sure tricks are given as these: Ace, king, * * *; ace, queen, knave, * *; king, queen, knave, * *. The * indicates any card below the ten.

This system of bidding got a rude shock when it was found that the team that won and still holds the championship of the United States laughed at it. They did not wait for any such strength as this to bid, and had evidently evolved some entirely original method of valuing their cards. This system it is the object of the present article to explain, but first a word as to what it has accomplished.

Last summer, auction players from all parts of the United States and Canada met at Spring Lake, New Jersey, at the annual congress of the American Whist League, and teams of four from various clubs in Chicago, New York, Pittsburg, Hartford, and Scranton met in the finals to play sixty deals in duplicate, for the championship. The four from the Knickerbocker Whist Club of New York won outright with the astonishing average of sixty-five points a deal over all competitors, their total being three thousand seven hundred and eighty-five points above average on the sixty deals, although all the matches were played on the duplicate system, every team holding the same cards under the same conditions against every other team.

The result was apparently entirely due to better bidding, as all the entrants were first-class players when it came to getting the tricks. It was soon observed that the winners seldom overbid a hand, and never stopped bidding until they had reached the limit that it was possible to make. They seemed to have as accurate an idea of how many tricks their hands would produce in play, with any declaration, as if they were counting up their shillings to see if they had enough to make a pound.

Instead of bidding a certain suit because the books say it is the correct declaration with such-and-such cards, the modern system, which is being rapidly adopted by the best players throughout the country, is based upon the

player's ability to translate any combination of cards into the number of tricks it should win in play, on the average; as a bid, as an assist, or as a double; at any declaration, in any position at the table.

The bidding is no longer a guess. It is no longer parrot-like. It is reduced to a science.

The fundamental principle of the new system lies in the discovery that all high cards are worth twice as much to the side that gets the winning declaration and plays the attack as they would be in the hands of the side that plays on the defensive.

My attention was first called to this fact by a hand that I published in my "Advanced Auction Bridge," page 53, seven years ago. Give each of the four players at the table exactly the same cards in a no-trumper; ace, knave, six, two of one suit; king, seven, five of another; queen, eight, four of the third; and ten, nine, three of the fourth, and it does not matter which player is the declarer (the attacking hand), he will win eight or nine of the thirteen tricks, or twice as many as his opponents, who are on the defensive.

It took a long time to develop this idea into an harmonious system and test it; but after running it through two thousand of the ten thousand recorded deals that I have on file for testing purposes, I can guarantee that it is sound—that is, that it will beat averages; and I have allowed it to emerge easily and naturally from one hundred and thirty deals from important duplicate matches in my forthcoming book, "Foster on Auction," of which the following is a synopsis.

There are four parts of the bidding which require special attention: (1) The original, or free bid; (2) the assist; (3) the denial or take-out; and (4) the defence. These are easily handled in either class of declarations, trumps or no trumps. The following principles cover everything, and should enable any person of ordinary intelligence to bid any hand to its exact value.

Certain combinations of cards have a definite average value as trick-winners, according to the declaration, and these values, when added together, give the average playing value of the whole hand. The hand may produce more than its value upon occasion, and again it may fall short; but the idea is that it will beat averages. No bid will win all the time, any more than bad bidding loses all the time.

There are thirteen tricks to be played for in every hand, and the lowest bid allowed undertakes to win seven of them. If the dealer has more than his share, which would be four or more, he should be able to make a bid of some kind, unless the distribution is unfavourable, such as insufficient length in the major suits. If he has four, there are nine to be distributed among the three other players, one of whom is the dealer's partner. Add his three to the dealer's four and we get the seven required to carry out the contract.

In order to bid on four tricks, one must know what constitutes four tricks, and must have confidence that the valuation will hold in the majority of cases. Sometimes what counts four will be worth two or three only; sometimes five or six. All modern bidding is based on averages. There are no longer any such things as sure tricks.

Every free bid, and every assist, presupposes that the bidder's side will get the contract. The side that hopes to play the hand counts each guarded ace as worth two tricks, and each guarded king as worth one. Queens, knaves, and tens are worth nothing except in combination with other honours. The following table shows the values of the various high-card combinations when held by the attacking hands:—

Ace, king, queen, knave, Ace, king, queen, ten, Ace, king, knave, ten, are each worth five; Ace, king, Ace, queen, knave, King, queen, knave, are each worth four; Ace, queen, ten, Ace, knave, ten, King, queen, ten, are each worth three; Ace, queen, Ace, knave, King, queen, are each worth two; King, knave, ten, King, knave, Queen, knave, ten, are each worth one.

These are not "sure tricks," but trick values.

The number of small cards does not alter these values, but as the major suits, hearts and spades, are declared in the hope that they will be the trump, there should be at least five cards in suit, or four very strong ones. The following are strong enough in themselves for a free bid:—Ace, king, knave, ten; ace, queen, knave, ten; king, queen, knave, ten; ace, king, queen, *.

Length in the minor suits, clubs and diamonds, is not important, as they are bid to show tricks, not trumps, and always in the hope that the partner will have something better.

Major suits ask for support. Minor suits offer it.

In every free bid, at least two of the four or more values should be in the suit named, or it is a secondary bid, not a free bid. Suits that contain only three values require an outside king to bring the total value up to four. Suits worth two only require two values outside; an ace, a king-queen suit, or two kings.

A very important feature in modern bidding is to distinguish hands that have all the strength in one suit from those that have trick values in two suits. The rule is to bid all the hand is worth if it is all in one suit and to rebid the hand if it is in two suits. The minor suits are never bid for more than one at the start, unless they are strong enough to bid five and go game with average assistance from the partner. The two-trick bid in a strong minor suit is a thing of the past. It forces the partner to go too high to take it out.

A suit of only five cards in hearts or spades is never bid originally for more than one trick, no matter how strong it is. With four values in the suit itself, and six cards, bid two; with seven cards, bid three; with eight cards, bid four. With only three values in the suit itself, never bid two originally unless there are seven in suit; with eight in suit, bid three. Suits with less than two values at the top are never worth an original bid unless there are eight cards; then bid four hearts or three spades, as a shut-out.

When there are two or three values in a second

suit, in addition to the four in the suit named, the suit is rebid to show the outside tricks. Five hearts to the ace, king is a free bid for the dealer, or second hand if the dealer passes, even with nothing outside. With the ace of another suit, the bidding would be one heart the first time, and two hearts, if necessary, on the second round.

To rebid a hand without assistance from the partner, or without waiting for it, the declarer should have six values, to provide against the possibility that his partner's hand may be below average. To rebid again he should have eight, and to rebid a third time, ten.

With two suits which are both sound free bids, always bid the higher-ranking suit first; not necessarily the stronger. With five hearts to the ace, king, queen, and five spades to the ace, knave, ten, bid the spades first, then the hearts, if opportunity offers. When one suit is major, the other minor, the minor suit should never be mentioned. Keep rebidding the major suit. With five spades to the ace, knave, ten, and six diamonds to the ace, king, queen, knave, bid a spade and rebid the spades twice, if necessary.

To bid no-trumps, there should be at least four values distributed among three suits, or between two suits, and a third suit safely stopped, even if it has no values. It is better to have five values for a no-trumper, unless it is bid second hand, after the dealer has passed. A good major-suit bid should always be given the preference if there is a choice between that and no-trumps.

The trumps in the partner's hand have an entirely different value from those held by the declarer, and the honours are not worth as much as honours in plain suits. This trump valuation is an entirely new thing in bidding.

The normal bid on a major suit is five cards, and the average holding for the partner would be two or three. As three small trumps will win a trick, separately from the declarer's trumps, about half the time, we rate them at half a trick. The same value is attached to two trumps, if one is as good as the queen. An extra trump or honours adds to this value, but no trump holding is worth more than two, as trumps. Any additional value depends on the ability to ruff some suit on the first or second round. Such values are added to the value of the trumps themselves, according to this table :—

Three small, or one honour (queen, king, or ace) and one small, equals a half; four small, or one honour (queen, king, or ace) and two small, equals one and a half; two honours (knave and one better) and two or more small, equals two; for ruffing first round of a suit, add ace value, equals two; for ruffing second round of a suit, add king value, equals one; ruffing both first and second, with at least four trumps, equals three.

The assisting bids in suit are based on the dealer's having probably only four values, so that he expects his partner to hold three. Add to these the half for average trumps, and we get three and a half as the average value of the partner's hand in a suit bid. It is highly important to remember that these three and a hal values are included in the original declaratio Therefore the partner should never assist unles he holds more than three and a half.

With four and a half he should assist once if the bid is overcalled; with five and a ha assist twice, and with six and a half assist agai

If the declarer rebids his hand without waitin for any assist, or in spite of its absence, assis with three and a half. If he has rebid twic assist with two and a half. If he rebids thre times, assist with one and a half.

Holding less than average trumps, such a two small only, the partner must deny the su unless it is an original two-bid. Bid any su with two or more values in it and four or fiv cards. With no such strength, bid any suit five cards. With nothing, pass. The momen the partner denies a suit, the cards in it fall fro their attacking value to their defensive value, one-half that given in the table. A heart bi on five to the ace, king is normally worth four but if the partner denies the suit it is worth tw only. The shifting value of a hand is ofte interesting. For example :—The dealer bids on heart on these cards: five hearts to the ac queen, knave; four diamonds to the ace, knav ten; three spades to the queen and one sma club. His partner denies the hearts with a spad The original bid was worth seven values. Th hearts are reduced to two, the spades increase to one and a half, with one more for the clu ruff, while the diamonds remain at three, as tha suit has not been denied. Worth seven and half, or three assists, in spades, allowing for th possible weakness of a forced denial.

The defensive bids cut all valuations in hal so that holding ace, king, and others in clubs an the ace of spades against a heart contract, the are only three values for defence. The defensiv bids third hand, after two passes, or the ask fo a lead fourth hand against a no-trumper, a matters of judgment.

As an example of this system of counting u the trick values, take this hand, one of tho played at Spring Lake :—

Hearts—10, 6, 4.
Clubs—King, queen, 8, 4.
Diamonds—7, 3, 2.
Spades—Ace, 4, 2.

Hearts—Ace, 3.
Clubs—10, 9, 5.
Diamonds—Ace, king, 9, 8, 4.
Spades—9, 8, 5.

Y
A B
Z

Hearts—King, quee knave, 8, 5,
Clubs—7, 3.
Diamonds—10, 6, 5.
Spades—7, 3.

Hearts—9, 7.
Clubs—Ace, knave, 6, 2.
Diamonds—Queen, knave.
Spades—King, queen, knave, 10, 6.

Z bids a spade on six values. A two diamond on six values. Y passes, having only the avera three and a half. B two hearts (legitimate tw bid on six cards). Z rebids. A assists hear with four and a half values, and Y assists th rebid hand with his three and a half. B has rebid. Note that A's hearts drop to a ha value as trumps. Either side can make the bid three odd.

The Black Woman

By VIOLET M. METHLEY.

Illustrated by Reg. F. Smith.

JESSAMY stood before the old-fashioned horse-hair sofa, gazing at the soft creamy satin dress outspread upon it.

Ian had insisted upon a proper wedding-dress, just as he had insisted upon a proper wedding.

"I want my one and only wedding-day to be just perfect," he said. "A real spring day—if my luck holds—and the church all moss and primroses, and the old bells ringing, and the few people I care about waiting to sign the register. Perkins playing the wedding-march ever so badly, and you coming up the aisle, all in white, and just a little shy, and—oh, you darling——"

After this, his comments became more incoherent than his wishes. And since they *were* Ian's wishes, Jessamy henceforth adopted them as her own.

The wedding-dress had been ready for months, waiting for the ninety-six hours' leave which seemed to linger so terribly. And then, after all, it came just as Ian wished—in late March, when the hedgerows were full of moss and primroses, waiting to be transferred to the old grey church.

Jessamy went straight down to Meadowleigh directly Ian's telegram came; it had been arranged beforehand that she was to meet him there, just as it had been arranged that he should put up at the inn for the one night preceding the wedding, whilst Jessamy stayed with his uncle and aunt at their tiny Georgian house in the tiny street of one of the tiniest villages in England.

The evening had passed like a dream. Jessamy could only remember two clear feelings, when at last she reached her bedroom—intense joy at being with Ian once more, and intense shyness of his relations, the over-noisy General and the over-silent Generaless.

Shyness was Jessamy's besetting misery. New people—even strange servants and strange shopmen—were a real terror to her, unless they were very old or very young. Why, she had actually been shy of Ian once; she was shy of him now—sometimes.

But at this moment the girl had forgotten everything else, except the soft white gown upon the sofa, and the strange beautiful thing of which that gown was the outward symbol. Other things lay piled there, too: little white slippers, silk stockings, lacy softnesses, all run through with ribbons which should bring the marriage-luck of "something blue."

"And my Limerick veil is the 'something borrowed,' and the rose-point collar 'something old,'" Jessamy sighed, rapturously. "As for 'something new'—well, there's plenty of that!"

The girl went slowly across to the wide-open window, and stood there for some time, looking down into the shadowy garden, with the sweet, earthy-smelling air cooling her hot cheeks. She stood there so long that the candle burnt low—went out—leaving the room all in soft spring darkness.

Jessamy came back to practical things with a start of dismay. There was no second candle in the room, no gas or electric light in the whole of the old-fashioned house. Well, she must finish getting ready for bed in the dark.

When, at last, all her preparations completed, the girl slipped in between the lavender-sweet sheets, it was to fall asleep with a soft whisper in her ears: "To-morrow . . . to-morrow."

Perhaps it was just the voice of her heart.

To-morrow came with a pearl-grey dawn and an extremely early bustle and movement in the house. For weddings do not take place every day in Meadowleigh, and this one was fixed for ten o'clock. Earliest of all the small household was Maggie the parlourmaid, and when the cook and housemaid descended, they found her sitting upon a stiff oak chair by the open front door, her usually ruddy face almost pale.

"Why, Maggie, whatever *is* the matter?" cook ejaculated. "You look to me as though you'd got a bilious attack!"

"It's nothing of the sort!" the girl protested, indignantly. "But I've 'ad such a turn as you can't think——"

"What d'you mean?"

"I 'adn't but just opened the front door to

hair the 'all and gone out in the porch with the mats, when she come out past me. I do declare I could 'ave screamed, I was that frightened!"

"'Oo come out?" cook demanded, impatiently.

"A black woman!"

"A black woman! Whatever do you mean?"

"Just what I says—a nigger woman it was—as black as that stove; I've never see'd anything like 'er before. An' the look in 'er eyes made me feel fair sick—you could tell she was up to no good. 'Orrible, it was. She whisked past me before you could say 'knife,' an' was down the path an' out of the gate."

"Didn't you try to stop 'er?"

"What, an' as like as not be shot or stabbed or something—not me! Besides, I was just about too frightened to move, even if I *'ad* dared."

"Well, we'd best look round and see if anything's missing," the housemaid decided. "I expect robbery's what she was after—it's a lucky thing the missis keeps the silver-basket in her own room."

A careful search revealed nothing missing in dining-room, drawing-room, or pantry; the servants, much relieved in mind, partook of their early tea, before waking the rest of the household, and lingered over it longer than usual in earnest discussion of the mysterious negress.

It was not until an hour or so later that the housemaid discovered a further and more absorbing mystery. She went to call Jessamy and found that the bride-elect had vanished.

Her bed was disordered; the drawers and wardrobe flung open as though she had dressed in a hurry, disturbed by some sudden, peremptory summons. There was no note of explanation; the girl had simply disappeared.

Ian Kinross, summoned hastily from the little inn, found a most perturbed and distressed household assembled in the hall.

"I've always said you were making a mistake, Ian—to marry a girl none of us knew. This is the result!" was the rather illogical climax of the General's voluble arguments.

"Perhaps she's only gone for a walk—couldn't sleep or something." Ian's face, white and stern-lipped, belied the lightness of his tone.

"My dear boy, nonsense! No woman would leave herself less than an hour to dress for her wedding," the Generaless said, decisively, and, as usual, her rare utterance sounded conclusive.

Maggie, the parlourmaid, began to sob hysterically.

"It's that black woman," she gasped. "She's made away with Miss Elton—I knew when I see'd 'er that she'd been up to no good."

"A black woman—what do you mean by that?" Kinross demanded, and tore Maggie's story from her, bit by bit.

Ten minutes later he strode grimly down the garden-path on the track of Jessamy or the mysterious negress, either or both. Some instinct told him that the one would involve the other, that the black woman was the sinister clue to the problem.

It turned out to be a clue even easier to follow than he had hoped; such a visitant was rarely seen in Meadowleigh, and she had been observed, wide-eyed, even at that early hour. A little child had fled screaming, a woman had caught a glimpse of her, hiding behind a hedge, whilst Kinross's own landlord at the Bexton Arms could give more explicit information.

"Yes, she come here about half-past six," he said. "Wanted a conveyance to drive to Mildent at once. We've only the one pony-cart, and it took a bit of time to get the horse in and all that. And, my word, she did seem impatient. I heard her tramping up and down the parlour. Nice-spoken, she was, too, but I never could abide niggers; they give me the creeps."

"Was she alone?"

"S'far as I saw, sir. Of course, someone might have been waiting. The lady didn't want to be seen—I noticed that; she shut herself into the parlour and locked the door. But I put it down to her blackness——"

"Lend me that bicycle of yours, will you, Standen? I must go to Mildent at once."

"Certainly, Captain; but——" The man stared perplexedly. "I thought it was your wedding-day, sir?"

"So it is, but that needn't prevent me from going to Mildent. I may take the bicycle, then? Thanks."

Ian Kinross rode swiftly along the seven-mile-long road which led to Mildent, his eyes, haggard and strained, searching the country to either side of him. It was an exquisite spring morning, but for the young man a sinister cloud hung over the whole peaceful landscape.

What could it mean—what could it possibly mean? With sickening iteration, the question drummed itself out in his brain. That Jessamy, on this morning of all mornings in her life, should have left the house of her own volition, was impossible—incredible. And if not it meant that she had been carried away by force, or stratagem—it meant foul play, of some description.

Kinross rode on faster, trying by sheer speed to escape from the horror and dread which filled him.

Even in Mildent, that bustling country town, it did not prove so difficult to keep the scent as he had feared. A policeman at the corner of the market-place had noticed the black woman.

"Yes, sir; she passed in Standen's cart from Meadowleigh. No, sir; I'm afraid I didn't notice who was with her, I was staring that hard. It's not every day one sees such a black lady as that, sir."

"Which way did she go?" Kinross demanded.

"Along North Gate, sir—towards the Rose and Crown, I expect. That's where Standen usually puts up."

To the Rose and Crown accordingly the young man rode, and found, as he had hoped, the pony-cart drawn up in the yard. But the driver, who might have been its mouthpiece, was lacking, and a loitering stableman could give little information.

"Bill Jones, 'e brought the cart in empty," he asserted. "Said as 'e'd get a bit o' breakfast and come back for it later. P'r'aps 'e meant the fare 'ud be going back, too—I don't know."

"IAN KINROSS, SUMMONED HASTILY FROM THE LITTLE INN, FOUND A MOST PERTURBED AND DISTRESSED HOUSEHOLD ASSEMBLED IN THE HALL."

Kinross stared at the cart despairingly—then suddenly started forward with a sharp exclamation, and snatched something from the seat. He stood staring at the little glove which he held, plainly and unmistakably one of a pair which he himself had given to Jessamy—a particularly nice fur-lined pair. So he was on the right track—Jessamy and the black woman were together; so much was certain.

Kinross thrust the glove into his pocket, and turned back into the street, whiter and more stern-lipped than ever. He stood hesitating for a moment, uncertain which way to go, but chance was still upon his side. A small boy sidled up to him.

"Mister, was you wanting the black lady what rode in that 'ere cart?" he asked.

"Yes!" Captain Kinross, in his eagerness, scarcely proved himself a good detective. "Yes—I want her most particularly. Look here, my son, I'll give you half a crown if you can tell me which way she's gone."

"Whoy, she went into that shop over there—I seen her!" The boy pointed across the market-place, his eyes and mouth almost as round as his promised fee with amazed delight. "That shop wiv' all the 'air in the winder."

Kinross hurriedly produced the coin, and plunged across the cobbled square towards the shop in question. It was a hairdresser's, in the window of which a pasty-faced waxen image slowly revolved, displaying in turn an inviting leer and an impossibly coiffured back-view.

The door-bell clashed with the violence of Kinross's entry, and he was confronted across the counter by a small and unmasculine individual in a white apron.

"I want to see the black woman who came in here a little while ago," Kinross blurted out, and immediately afterwards cursed himself inwardly for his want of tact.

The small man tittered nervously.

"Well, reely, sir——" he began, but the young man interrupted, realizing that since he had begun to bluster, he must carry through the business with the same weapon.

"Don't keep me waiting, but tell me where she is at once."

"Well, reely, sir, I don't know—— You don't 'appen to be 'er 'usband——?"

"No!"

"Well, reel——"

"Take me to her at once!"

"Well, reely—I 'aven't even said as she's 'ere, sir——"

"There's no need. Is anyone with her?"

"She most pertickler told me not to say——"

"*Where* is she?"

"Well, reely——"

But Kinross waited for no more. Suddenly his last shred of patience vanished, and he strode straight through the door at the back of the shop,

past the stammering, gasping little hairdresser. Ahead lay the kitchen premises, indicated by the smell of cooking, present and past; to his right rose a single oil-clothed flight of stairs, with one yellow-painted door at the head of it.

Upstairs Kinross went, three steps at a time, past all the ordinary rules of convention by now. Next instant he was knocking upon the door with both fists.

"Who's in there?" he demanded, and waited for an answer, cold and sick with suspense.

Something like a frightened gasp came from within the room—something that was almost like a sob. There was silence for a moment, then a quavering, uncertain voice spoke.

"Then—oh, what on earth are you up to? Have you forgotten that it's our wedding-day—that they're waiting at the church already?"

"I—can't marry you—at least, not now—not to-day—I simply can't."

Kinross grew whiter than ever and his brows drew together in a heavy frown. He was not at any time a particularly patient man, and in this instance Job himself might have been pardoned for a touch of irritation.

"Look here, Jessamy, I'm not going to stand this," he said, sternly. "Have you any reason for this extraordinary conduct?"

"Yes!"

"Then tell me what it is at once. Have you

"THE BOY POINTED ACROSS THE MARKET-PLACE, HIS EYES AND MOUTH ALMOST AS ROUND AS HIS PROMISED FEE."

"What d-do you w-want——?"

At the sound of that voice, Kinross's heart gave a great throb of joy and relief. Plainly and unmistakably, it was Jessamy speaking. So, at least, she was alive—and within reach. Not until that moment did Kinross realize fully how ghastly had been his fears.

"Jessamy—Jessamy, my dear!" he cried. "So you are here—you're all right. Open the door at once, and tell me what on earth you're playing at, you little villain!"

"I—I can't——" The voice broke in a sob.

"Can't? What d'you mean?"

"I—I—oh, Ian, I can't open the door—it's no use——"

"What in Heaven's name do you mean, Jessamy? I say—are you ill, dear?"

"No."

heard any lies about me—has someone been making mischief?"

"No—oh, no!"

"Then—have you discovered that—that you don't care for me enough, after all?" In spite of all his resolution and sternness, the young fellow's voice was not quite steady.

"No—no—oh, Ian, darling, it's nothing of that sort!"

"Then what is all this cursed mystery? Jessamy, I insist on hearing."

"I—I *can't* tell you—I've been a fool! Oh, Ian, please go away!"

"I shall do nothing of the sort." Kinross was growing each moment steadily more angry now. "I know who is at the bottom of this—and I know that she's with you now; that cursed black woman!"

"CRASH! WENT ONE SHOULDER THROUGH THE FLIMSY YELLOW-PAINTED PANEL; WITH A SPLINTERING, RENDING SOUND, THE HINGES GAVE WAY, SO UNEXPECTEDLY THAT KINROSS PLUNGED HEADLONG INTO THE ROOM."

"Oh!" Again there came that little gasping sob.

"Am I right? Is she with you in the room now—tell me at once, Jessamy!"

Broken by a sob came the answer at last

"Yes."

"Of course—I knew it! Then why doesn't she speak for herself? How did she manage to persuade you to come away *to-day*—oh, good heavens, what's the meaning of it all?"

"I can't tell you now. Oh, Ian, if you love me, you'll go away—for a little while, at any rate——"

"If I love you, I'll stay and get to the bottom of this." His voice altered and grew very tender. "Little girl, I'm the next thing to your husband already—I've the right to know, since you'll be my wife in an hour or two."

"No, Ian, I—I can't marry you to-day——"

"You shall! Jessamy, open the door this minute—let me speak to you properly."

"No—you mustn't. Ian, if you knew the truth, you—I don't believe you'd want to——"

"The truth? About this confounded negress?"

"Yes. About—about the negress——"

The voice broke. Kinross could hear the girl crying, in a stifled, appealing fashion.

Suddenly, without further consideration, driven to desperation by that piteous sound, Ian Kinross acted. He measured the distance, drew back, and threw his whole weight against the door. Crash! went one shoulder through the flimsy yellow-painted panel; with a splintering, rending sound, the hinges gave way, so unexpectedly that Kinross plunged headlong into the room, and recovered his footing only by an effort.

There was a little cry from the angle of the room between the window and the fireplace. Kinross, recovering his equilibrium, stared and stared, as though the balance of his mind was far from being equally restored. He felt utterly dazed and bewildered, for the slim figure in the corner was the sole apparent occupant of the room, the figure which leant back against the wall, trying to hide an ebony-black face with two slender black hands.

The young man spoke hoarsely.

"What's it mean—am I mad? Oh, for God's sake, whoever you are, tell me what it means? Where's Jessamy?"

The appeal in his voice was strained and almost piteous. Suddenly, the figure in the corner drew itself up with a little sob—came towards him, black hands outstretched.

"Oh, Ian—Ian, don't you know me?" she said.

It was Jessamy's voice—and they were Jessamy's eyes, brown, and gold-flecked, shining out strangely from the blackness of the face. Kinross stared and stared again, speechlessly, and the girl went on speaking eagerly.

"I'll explain now—I'll tell you all about it. It—it doesn't matter—since you *have* seen me——"

She buried her face in her hands for a moment, then looked up and spoke steadily.

"This is what happened. I dawdled last night and my candle went out before I was quite ready; I had to finish getting to bed in the dark. And I wanted to look especially nice to-day—nicer than I'd ever looked before in my life—oh, you understand, don't you, Ian! It wasn't just—just vainness; a girl *does*. So I'd bought some cream stuff to rub on my face and hands: the cold wind makes them burn so and look red and rough. I found the bottle in the dark and rubbed it on very thoroughly, according to the directions, all over my hands and arms and face and neck. Then I went to bed.

"It was just getting light when I woke up; the birds were singing, and I thought I'd look out and see the sun rising. As I went to the window, I saw myself in the glass. And I was like this.

"I thought, for a minute, that I was mad; then I found out what had happened. The pot of face-cream was very much the same size and shape as a jar of black polish and stain for kid shoes—and I had used the wrong one. I scrubbed and scrubbed at my face and hands, but they only seemed to get blacker and blacker; I know now that water was the very worst thing to use. I tried everything I could think of, but it didn't have any effect.

"After nearly an hour, I was pretty desperate, and I suppose it made me hysterical and foolish. Anyhow, I simply couldn't face the idea of telling people—of letting anyone in the house see me—like this. Most awful of all was the thought of *you* seeing me—on our wedding-day—the day when I wanted above all things to be, and to look, my very, *very* best—for your sake. I suppose I was a vain little fool——"

For a moment the girl paused, unable to go on; again she hid her face for a moment, then continued bravely.

"So I planned to slip out of the house, go to Mildent and get the stuff taken off, without telling anybody. One of the servants saw me, but I'm sure she didn't know who I was. I thought I should be back in time, but everything took so long, and when I got here the man said I should have to wait for a good while. He put some greasy stuff on, and it must soak in thoroughly before it will take off the blackness. You see—it's stained my skin, just as though it had been kid!"

She ended with a little shaking laugh, but the golden-brown eyes were full of tears. And suddenly Kinross took her into his arms and held her very close to him.

"Oh, my little girl, my poor little girl!" he whispered. "But you shouldn't have frightened me so horribly, Jessamy—you should have trusted me a bit more."

"It wasn't that—it was just my conceitedness, I suppose. But I *can't* be married like this, Ian, and it may be two or three hours before the black really comes off."

"Then we must just wait until you've changed your skin—you adorable little Ethiopian!"

"And—you don't really *mind* having seen me like this? Oh, Ian, darling, don't! My face is so horribly greasy, besides being black——"

For Kinross had proceeded to answer the question without words, but apparently completely to his and her satisfaction.

The Humour of WILMOT LUNT.

By ADRIAN MARGAUX.

THE son of a Warrington merchant, Wilmot Lunt decided whilst still a boy to make Art his profession. This was largely due to the happy accident which placed him at the Botelar Grammar School in that town under the tuition of a drawing-master of exceptional character and ability, Mr. J. C. Thompson. Mr. Thompson was also on the staff of the Warrington Art School, and in that institution had had among his pupils Sir Luke Fildes, R.A., and Mr. H. Woods, R.A. Mr. Lunt describes him as "a stern disciplinarian and a conscientious craftsman" who took great interest in his work and gave him much valuable advice.

After leaving school Mr. Lunt attended for some time the Lancashire School of Art. He knew that he would have to rely upon his own efforts if he was to make his way in Art. Accordingly he worked hard for and eventually obtained, at the age of nineteen, a Lancashire County Scholarship which provided him with three years' training as and where he would. The first term of this period he spent at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, but found its restraints too irksome and the fascination of the Paris ateliers too irresistible. Accordingly he proceeded to Paris and entered Julien's studio and worked under Professor Benjamin Constant and Jean Paul Laurens. "We all worked there," he says, "like Trojans under these masters. There were no 'red tape' regulations, but just the joy of working for the pleasure of the work, which was made

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Even a worm will turn!

doubly interesting by the sincere but caustic criticism of the professors, who always had an underlying kindliness, however, for earnest students."

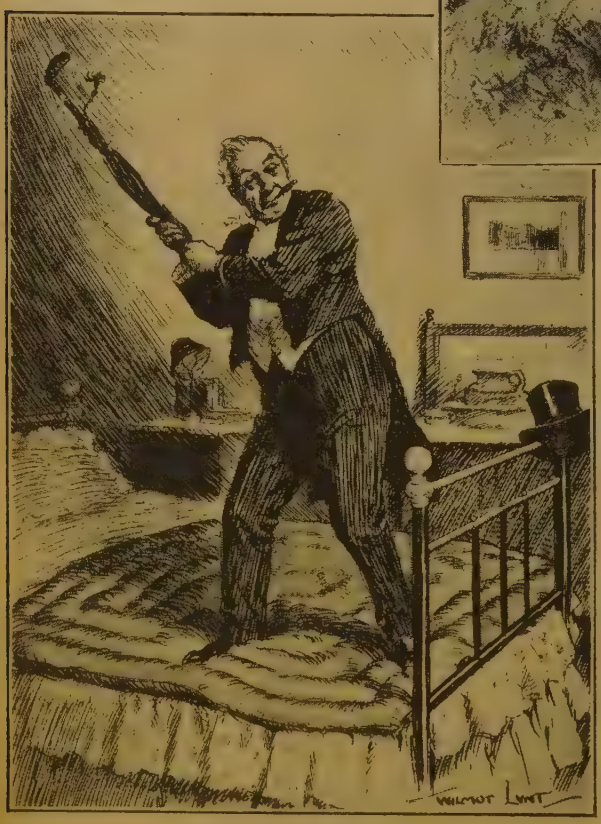
Mr. Lunt's ambition at this time was to become a painter in oils, and in pursuance of this ambition he painted during his leisure time a large canvas, "Les Funerailles d'une Nonne." Mr. Lunt recalls with a laugh how, in his shirt-sleeves, he wheeled the picture himself on a hand-cart to the Palais des Beaux Arts, assisted by an American artist whose name is now a household word in New York and Paris. "The picture was a sad affair," he says, "in every way, both in motive and achievement. But the judges at the Salon in the goodness of their hearts found some redeeming features evidently—for it was 'hung' at the exhibition of 1901, and my joy was complete."

But Mr. Lunt could not afford to wait whilst he was making a reputation as a painter. On leaving Paris, he frankly says, he was faced with the necessity of earning a livelihood and

DISMOUNTED CAVALRY IN ACTION.

THE CAVALRY INSTRUCTOR (to nervous recruit): "Push 'er 'ead up, sonny! I'ush 'er 'ead up! That'll stop 'er jumpin'."

By permission of the "Sketch."

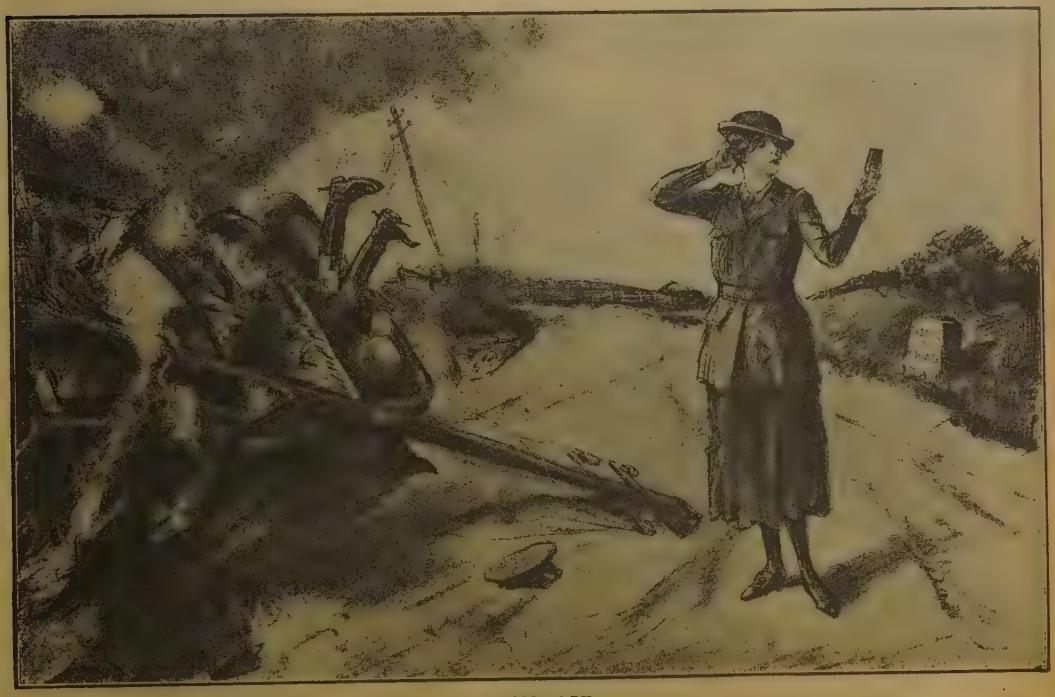


MOONLIGHT GOLF.

McFOOZLE (enthusiastic golfer): "Gee! What a lovely lie!"

By permission of "Printers' Pie."

the outlook was by no means "couleur de rose." In these circumstances he had to turn to black-and-white work, like other artists now eminent, as a "stand-by." Mr. Lunt went through the usual struggle until he found his feet. His first published drawings appeared in the *Idler* under the editorship of Mr. Robert Barr, who accepted a considerable number of contributions from him for that magazine. Since that time Mr. Lunt has worked for most of the illustrated periodicals, including *Punch*, the *Sketch*, the *Tatler*, *London Opinion*, and the *Bystander*. Latterly he has given much of his time to cartoons, and has found pleasure in ridiculing the Hun and his methods. Black-and-white work, indeed, at first regarded as a "stand-by," has become his main occupation, painting a luxury. He has contributed regularly, it is true, to the



FIRST AID.

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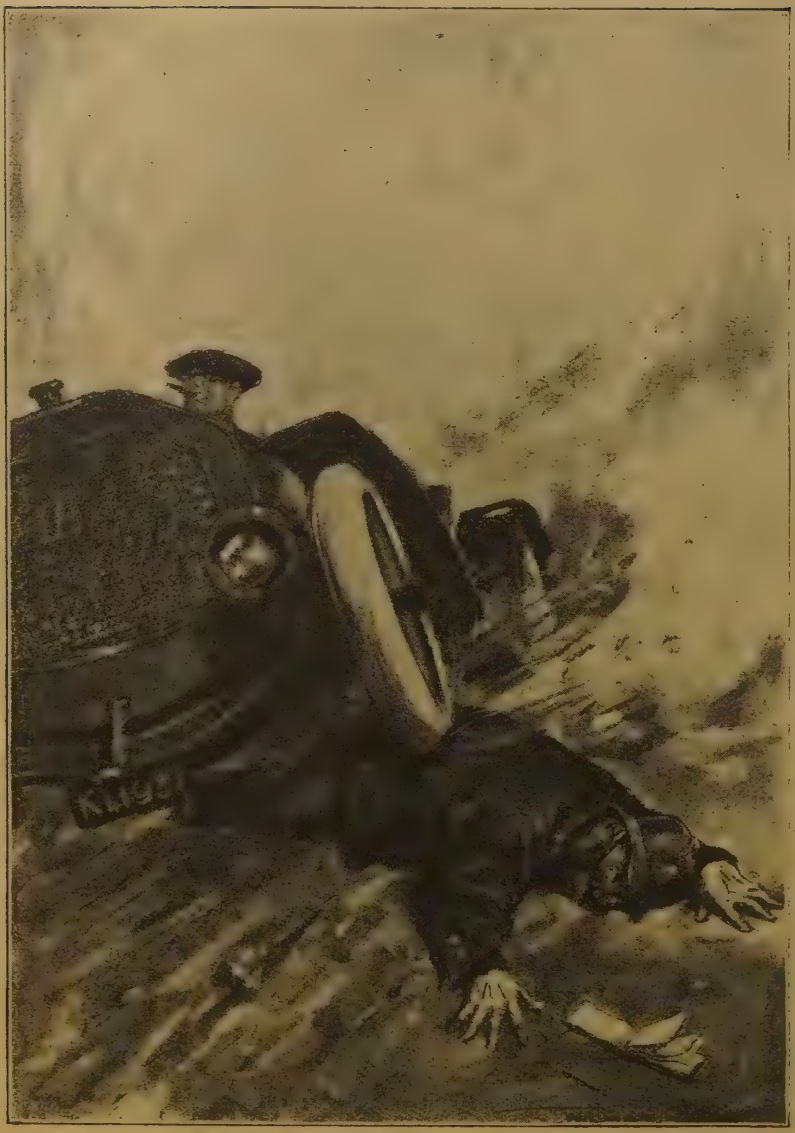
A FALSE ALARM.



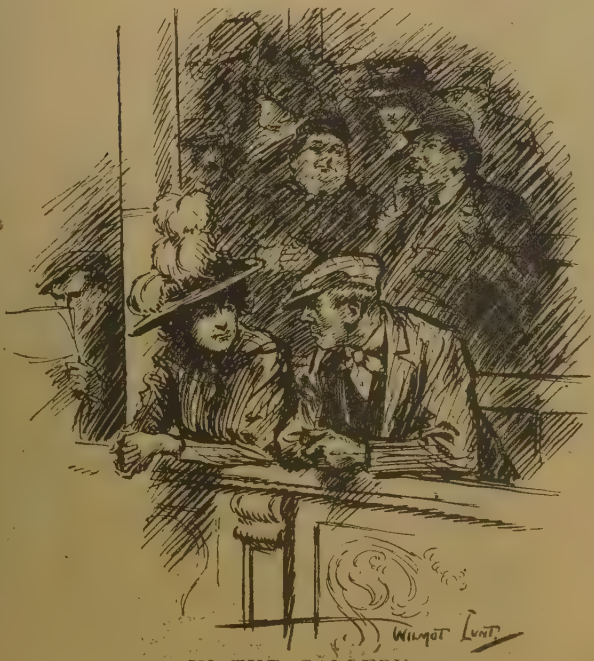
THE KNUT: "Gee Wiz! What a chicken!"

By permission of the "Sketch."

Royal Academy, but his contributions have been small and unpretentious pictures, having subjects which appealed to him at odd moments and produced in brief intervals of leisure during his regular work. His holidays have usually been spent on a motor-cycle, penetrating to all the principal sketching districts of the United Kingdom. Yorkshire, in the neighbourhood of Whitby, has been a particularly favourite ground for him. These sketches have not only borne fruit in pictures for the Academy but have also yielded excellent results in figures and backgrounds for his humorous work. The old type of seaman and longshoreman to be met with on the Yorkshire coast, for instance, together with the old boats and quays, have often been introduced into his drawings.

Questioned as to his method of work, Mr. Lunt replies that they are "just ordinary." "Unfortunately," he adds, "I have not discovered any easy way of doing it, and it seems to become more difficult. Rarely do I use models, preferring to rely on observations and memory. In this respect I owe a good deal to my excellent training in figure and costume drawing. As a general rule, I make a rough sketch of the composition and then make direct on the board a finished drawing. Probably living in the country has been responsible for my dispensing with models."

For the past ten years Mr. Lunt has resided in a village about fifteen miles from London, having emigrated there from Chelsea for the sake of health. His studio, a converted railway booking-office, is in the midst of a garden now largely devoted from patriotic motives to vegetable production, and containing also a model fowl-house, with a beautiful brood of white Leghorns. He and his wife have made a hobby of poultry-keeping, and it seems characteristic of their interest in the pursuit that when we had finished our talk in the studio I should be asked to inspect the birds, and my admiration for their immaculate condition is as unbounded as it is spontaneous. Unlike some artists who live in the country, however, Mr. Lunt does not consider that country life is in the interests of his work. "For purposes of work on topical matters," he says, "the town dweller scores. Being on the spot he has constant opportunities of reference and a ready choice of models — an important matter."



IN THE GALLERY.

'ARRY: "Wur's Bill? Don't see 'im nowhere."
'ARRIETT: "Bill? Oh, 'e couldn't get in. 'E swallered 'is tanner." *By permission of "Printers' Pie."*

"No, I have no theory on art, humorous or otherwise," Mr. Lunt says in reply to another question. "It is all a mystery to me and I dare advance no dogma of my own. For in all probability in a short time I should find myself hopelessly wrong Art has a wide outlook and I am no critic. My imagination, I fear, is much in advance of my execution (as is generally the case with artists), and in consequence my work always appears to me hopelessly unsatisfactory. But I find even failures stimulating and I am always learning something, even if it is only how not to do it."

ENERGETIC OLD LADY (who has speared old gent's hat): "It's all right—I've got it!"
By permission of "London Opinion."

THE PROBLEM CLUB.

By BARRY PAIN.

Illustrated by A. Garrett.

No. VIII.

THE IMPERSONATION PROBLEM.

THE terms of the Impersonation Problem, which came up for adjudication at the fiftieth meeting of the Club, were as follows :—

"It is required to be mistaken for six different people in the course of one hour."

Mr. Wildersley, A.R.A.—large, cheerful, and childlike—took the chair, and observed that it was just as well for other members that the dignified position of adjudicator prevented him from competing, as otherwise he would have been a certain winner. It was a claim that the chairman for the evening very frequently made, but Wildersley was not very serious about it.

"My profession," he said, "would have given me a start of about eighty yards in the hundred. I'm skilled in the rapid use of oil-paints. Within the prescribed limit of one hour I could have painted myself to look like a rabbit, or a tomato, or a man, or a hole in the ground, or any other object of the sea-shore, so as absolutely to defy detection. Not one of you duffers would have had a chance."

"Pardon the interruption," said Mr. Quillian, K.C., "but the terms of the problem require us to be mistaken for six different people. May I ask the chairman if he would consider a rabbit and a tomato as being people for the purposes of this problem ?"

"The time of the chairman," said Wildersley, severely, "is not to be wasted on purely hypothetical cases. If, when his turn comes, Mr. Quillian claims to have been mistaken for a rabbit I shall be ready both to believe it and to adjudicate upon it. And now, gentlemen, we will have the story of your dismal failures. Hesseltine here is acting as secretary to-night, and he may as well get his talking done first, so that he can give his undivided attention to his duties."

"Well," said Hesseltine, "Feldane and I went into partnership this time, as the rules permit. We don't claim to have scored the full six, but we had a lovely time while it lasted. Jimmy had better tell you about it, as he played the lead."

"Yes," said Jimmy, with a weary smile, "it was quite on the amusing side. Involved a lot of work though—thinking it all out and getting together the properties for the drama. If we scooped fifty-five pounds each over it we shouldn't be overpaid, but just as we were doing nicely the bottom fell out of it. However, I'll tell you."

The incidents which Jimmy related were as follows. Early on a fine morning he and Hesseltine were conveyed by a taxi-cab to a point, previously selected, on a road on the outskirts of a south-western suburb. Here they unloaded their miscellaneous collection of properties and got to work. The driver took the cab off to a public-house in the vicinity, and there awaited further orders.

Hesseltine was disguised as a labourer. Jimmy, who was to act as his boss, was got up as, to use his own description, "a sort of semi-scientific clerky person, clad in a seedy suit, a pince-nez, and an air of educated wisdom." They began by enclosing a portion of the roadway

with stakes and ropes, fixing red flags at the corners of the square. Then Hesseltine entered the enclosure and began vigorously to dig a hole in the road with pick and spade. It was still early, and there were few people about. So Hesseltine's boss condescended to lend a hand with the digging. Afterwards Feldane contented himself with strolling round the hole with a voltmeter, borrowed from the taxi-cab, in one hand, a two-foot rule sticking out of his breast-pocket and a general air of importance.

When the hole was about three feet deep a sleepy policeman paused on his way past.

"Something wrong with the drains?" he asked.

"Hope not," said Feldane, cheerfully. "But that's what we're going to find out. We're just putting in the smoke-test on this section."

"I see," said the policeman. "You ain't from Mackworth's, are you?"

"Mackworth's? Oh, no. We're from Matthews and Byles', the sanitary engineers at Vauxhall. Dare say you know the name."

The policeman said he believed he'd heard it, and passed on. The game had now definitely begun, and there was only one hour to play it in and no time to be lost. A small car was approaching with a lady driving. Feldane ran into the road, held up his hand, and stopped it.

"Sorry, madam," he said to the lady, "but would you mind waiting just for a few seconds? I'm sure you'll understand. We've got an Erichsen's galvanometrical balance working in that hole, and the least vibration would spoil the reading. We sha'n't be a minute."

"Certainly," said the lady. "I know something of these delicate instruments. What are you using it for?"

"We're from the Post Office Electrical Survey. There's trouble with the telegraph wires here that they can't locate. Of course if iron pyrites have been used in the construction of the road, that would account for it. We're looking into it. Bill," he called to Hesseltine, "what do you make it?"

Hesseltine examined the bottom of the hole. "Steady at two point five," he called back.

"Good. Let this car past, and then set a foot further in. Thank you very much, madam."

The unsuspecting lady drove on. Hesseltine sat down in the hole and laughed. Jimmy glanced at his watch. "That's two in under ten minutes," he said. "If we can keep it up at anything like this rate, we ought to do."

But for some time after this passers-by proved curious but unenterprising. They stared with the keenest interest at the proceedings, but did not put in any inquiry. Then an elderly tramp paused on his way into the town.

"Water-main?" he suggested.

"Aye," said Jimmy.

"All that work for a little water! Sooner you than me."

Almost immediately afterwards a rather fussy and important little man demanded to know what it was all about.

"Gas," said Jimmy laconically.

"There's no gas-main in this road," snapped the little man.

"No," said Jimmy. "Nor likely to be until we've took the level for the pipes. Pass along, please."

The little man said that it seemed hopeless to expect a civil answer to a civil question nowadays, but he passed along. Jimmy again consulted his watch.

"Four in half an hour," he observed. "We can hardly miss it now."

But fate was already on its way in the shape of a young, newly-appointed, eager, and suspicious policeman. He watched Jimmy and Hesseltine for a minute or so in silence. Jimmy made an entry in a pocket-book.

"All right, Bill," said Jimmy to Hesseltine. "You can fill in again now."

"What do you think you're doing?" asked the policeman.

"Rubberite Road Construction," said Jimmy. "They're putting down an experimental section here, and this is just the preliminary testing."

"Don't they put no notice-board up with the name of the firm on?"

"They will, of course, as soon as the actual work begins. I have their card." This printed card had been one of Jimmy's properties. The policeman slipped it into his pocket.

"I've no doubt it's all right," said the policeman, "but I'll just show this card to make sure."

"Certainly," said Jimmy; "that's the thing to do. You'll find they know all about it up at the station."

The game was up. As soon as the policeman was round the corner Jimmy dashed off to fetch the taxi, while Hesseltine completed the work of filling in the hole and gathering their various properties together. They had at least the satisfaction of getting clear away before the policeman returned.

The Chairman, when he had heard the story, said that if everybody had their rights it was probable that two of the younger members of the Problem Club would now be in prison, but he would allow them a score of five all the same. The fifth score might seem a little doubtful, but the young policeman had said that he believed it was all right, and if he had not would probably have taken stronger measures. The Chairman also refused to admit Quillian's objection that the conspirators had been mistaken for imaginary people. People might be real or imaginary, and the subtle editor of *The Pig-keepers' Friend* had not indicated that either meaning was excluded. A further protest by Major Byles and Mr. Matthews against the scandalous use that had been made of their names for the firm of sanitary engineers was not taken seriously.

But the Major may have been embittered by the completeness of his own failure. With the help of a grey wig and beard and some shabby clothes he had intended to call at six different back-doors and to represent in succession six different people—a beggar, a fortune-teller, a vender of cheap jewellery, and so forth. But the first back-door at which he called was his own, and there he was immediately recognized by a house-dog and by his own kitchen-maid. His subsequent explanation that he had merely been

"HIS STATEMENT THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD DRIVEN THE FIRST TRAIN THAT HAD PASSED UNDER THE THAMES IN THAT TUBE WAS RECEIVED BY AN OLD LADY WITH GREAT INTEREST."

doing it for a bet had not been well received. He did not give details, but it was gathered that Mrs. Byles had had a good deal to say on the subject.

Lord Herngill had done very little better. He had attempted no disguise at all. His idea had been, in the course of travel on the Bakerloo Tube railway, to get into conversation with six different people and to tell six plausible but erroneous stories about himself. His statement that he personally had driven the first train that had passed under the Thames in that tube, being in fact the consulting engineer of the company, was received by an old lady with great interest and not the slightest suspicion. He then changed into another carriage and found an opportunity to tell a young curate that though he lived within ten miles of London he had never been there in his life before. He was only there then because he had to see property that he had inherited at Swiss Cottage. And could the curate tell him at all where Swiss Cottage was?

That question was his undoing. "I can not only tell you," said the smiling curate, "but as it happens I am going there myself, and it will give me much pleasure to have your company."

And by the time that he had got rid of that curate it was hopeless to attempt his remaining impersonations within the prescribed time. It was generally felt that in a matter of impersonation Lord Herngill, on his previous character, should have done better.

Mr. Quillian had bestowed six shillings on six different crossing-sweepers. Five of them had said "Thank you, m'lord," and the other had said "Thank you, Captain." On this he claimed to have won, as it was obvious that all five crossing-sweepers could not have mistaken him for the same peer. It was pointed out to him by the chairman that there was not the slightest evidence that any one of those crossing-sweepers had made any mistake at all.

For once Pusely-Smythe had failed to compete, and said that he had been too busy. It was suggested that his time had been taken up with spending his winnings from the previous month. Mr. Matthews also had taken no part in the competition. The reason he gave was simple cowardice; the ghastly breakdown of his attempt to impersonate an old lady for the purposes of the Kiss Problem had spoiled his nerve for anything of the kind in the future.

The disgraceful adventure of Feldane and Hesseltine seemed likely to be the nearest approach to the problem-setter's requirements, until Sir Charles Bunford was called on for his experiences. Sir Charles claimed to have won.

"I came to the conclusion," said Sir Charles, "that the man who asks for something or tries to sell something is likely to create an atmosphere of suspicion. On the other hand the man who gives something, even to a complete stranger, will have his explanatory story accepted without question. The fact that he stands to lose by the transaction is accepted as evidence of his genuineness.

"With this conviction, and with such disguise as I thought advisable, I called at various houses all in one row in the Willesden neighbourhood. I was accompanied by a covered handcart, propelled by a boy hired for the purpose. Inside the handcart were the gifts that I had prepared for the occupants of the houses. Taking from the handcart a fruit-cake in a paper bag, I rang at the first house and requested the dirty little girl who opened it to fetch her dear mamma. Mamma appeared, wiping her hands on her apron, and looking displeased with life in general and me in particular.

"'Good morning, lady,' I said. 'I am instructed by my employers to ask you if you will do them the favour of accepting as a present this fruit-cake of their manufacture. They are shortly opening a branch in this neighbourhood and are taking this method of making ladies acquainted with the quality of their goods. It is, in fact, an advertisement.' After assuring herself again that there was nothing to pay, and that the consumption of the cake would not bind her to deal with my firm—Messrs. Butterstone and Co.—in future, she consented to accept the cake, and even to say that it seemed a straight way of doing business. She inquired where the new shop would be, which I told her, and what the price of a similar cake would be if she ever wanted to buy one. I put it at half

what I had paid for it, and she said it was a pleasant morning. Never for one moment did she doubt that I was what I had represented myself to be.

"At the next house with equal success I presented half a pound of butter as a sample of the products of the Farm Creameries Company, and a similar story. The third house got a tablet of scented soap from an enterprising chemist who was just starting in business in the neighbourhood. At the next three houses I distributed as free advertising samples a pound of sausages, a box of cigarettes, and a small bottle of whisky. It took longer than I had expected, because the ladies had such a lot of questions to ask about the new shops that were to be opened, but I finished six minutes under the hour. Of course, I could have carried all the goods round in a basket, but the handcart looked more like a house-to-house distribution on a large scale."

The decision was not given in his favour until after Quillian had raised an objection. He maintained that in each case Sir Charles had been mistaken for the same thing —to wit, the representative or agent in advance of a business firm. But the chairman's decision that Sir Charles had been mistaken for six different representatives of six different firms was generally approved. And as no other member had a claim to make the cheque was handed to him.

"'GOOD MORNING, LADY,' I SAID. 'I AM INSTRUCTED BY MY EMPLOYERS TO ASK YOU IF YOU WILL DO THEM THE FAVOUR OF ACCEPTING AS A PRESENT THIS FRUIT-CAKE."

The chairman then opened the sealed envelope containing the problem on which their ingenuity was next to be expended. It was entitled "The Alibi Problem," and the terms of it were as follows :—

"It is impossible for a man to be in two places at once. But it is required so to arrange matters that *bonâ-fide* evidence would be procurable that at a certain hour of a certain day or night you were in two places at once, the two places to be not less than one hundred miles from each other."

"Not uninteresting," said the Rev. Septimus Cunliffe, "but it leaves a good deal to the discretion of the chairman. He will have to decide which of us could produce the best evidence that the impossible had been accomplished. By the way, who is the next chairman ?"

"Should have been Harding Pope," said Wildersley. "But as he's gone, it will be the member elected in his place—our old friend Leonard, Lord Herngill."

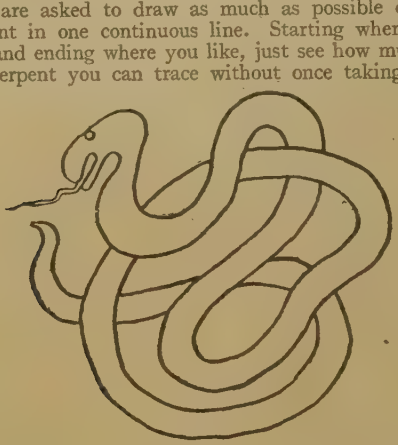
"My poor abilities are at your service," said Lord Herngill, laughing, "at London's lowest prices always."

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

413.—THE SIAMESE SERPENT.

THE conditions of this puzzle are exceedingly simple. You are asked to draw as much as possible of the serpent in one continuous line. Starting where you like and ending where you like, just see how much of the serpent you can trace without once taking your



pencil off the paper or going over the same line twice. An artful person might suggest a way of dodging the condition of going over a line twice by claiming that he drew half the width of the line going forward and the other half going back; but he is reminded that a line has no breadth!

414.—GIDSBY'S GEESE.

FARMER GIDSBY sent his man Jabez to market with a flock of geese, telling him to sell all or any of them in the way he considered best. This was the report of Jabez on his return at night: "First of all I sold Mr. Jasper Brown half of the flock and half a goose over; then I sold Farmer Woods a third of what remained and a third of a goose over; then I sold Widow Winter a quarter of what remained and three-quarters of a goose over: and as I was coming home whom should I meet but Ned Tompkins, so we had a drink together at the Wheatsheaf, where I sold him exactly a fifth of what I had left, and gave him the fifth of a goose for the missus. These nineteen I could not get rid of at any price."

Now, how many geese were there in Mr. Gidsby's flock when sent to market? Not a single goose was divided, cut up, or inconvenienced in any way whatever.

415.—THE TRAVELLER'S PUZZLE.

THE puzzle in this case is to place the point of your pencil on one of the stars and strike out every letter once until you come back to the other star, without lifting your pencil. If you do this in the fewest possible straight lines, the letters at the turning points ought to spell out the name of a book that should be familiar in every British household. What is the name of that book?

N	E	O	L	O	G	I	C
A	B	L	U	T	I	O	N
D	I	A	M	O	N	D	S
O	B	V	E	R	S	E	S
✲	S	U	N	B	U	R	N
✲	P	U	Z	Z	L	E	R
S	O	L	U	T	I	O	N
U	P	H	O	L	D	E	R

416.—A CHARADE.

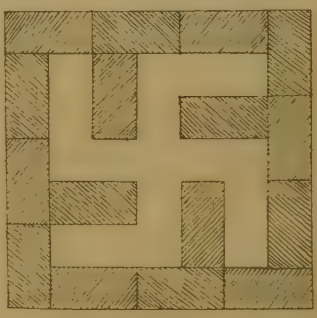
MY *whole* was once my *first*, but because he ceased to be so they put him under my *second* in Westminster Abbey.

417.—AN ENIGMA.

A CORRESPONDENT wonders whether the following enigma from his pen will perplex our readers. Probably it will not give them much difficulty to solve:—

I bought me for a trav'ling enterprise
A trav'ling-case of certain weight and size.
Proceeding then, with help, to pack it tight,
Will you believe me, but the thing grew light,
And when the lot received its final touch,
Its weight, with all my kit, was nothing much.
What was this *sac de voyage*, French when new,
Which with addition yet less weighty grew?

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.



409. THE DOMINO SWASTIKA.

HERE is the author's pretty solution. It will be seen that by placing the four extra dominoes in the positions shown a perfect swastika is formed within the frame.

410.—BUILDING A WORD SQUARE.

THE seven words constructed from the anagram letters will form the following square:—

N E S T L E S
E N T R A N T
S T R A N G E
T R A I T O R
L A N T E R N
E N G O R G E
S T E R N E R

411.—A CHARADE.

SEA—SONS.

412.—THE BARREL OF BALSAM.

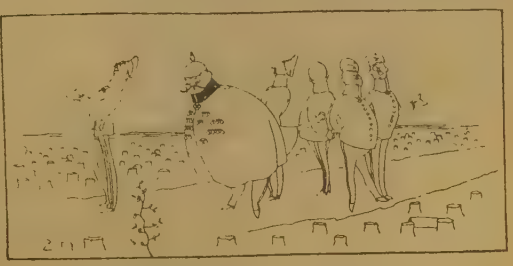
DIVIDE the given number by 12. If there is no remainder, it is the barrel No. 2; if it be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7, the remainder indicates the number of barrel; if the remainder exceed 7, deduct it from 14 and the result will be the barrel's number. Thus, 92,685 divided by 12 leaves the remainder 9, which, deducted from 14, tells us that the required barrel is No. 5.

An Idyll of Occupied France.

Verses by
Wallace Irwin.

Drawings by
Gluyas Williams.

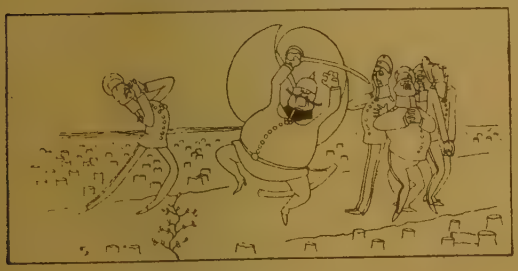
Quite habby makes der Cheneral yet
Ven all der offsawed trees are met.



"Ach, Himmel! Vot iss dot aboudt?
Vy should it yet dot branch upsproudt?

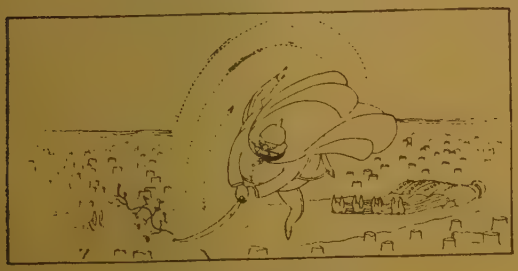
"Ven down to cut all trees vas plain
Der orders made, vy should remain

Dot Rosenbaum? Sooch undersight
Disgrace should be to Schrecklichkeit.



"By all der Hohenzollern line,
Me, Vilhelm und der right divine—

"Dummkopf! On you der sword I draw,
Choost like der tree you did nicht saw



"Und so upstandts Effizhency
To aid Imperial Chermany."

Den off he strides—he has em date
Em Russian peace to agitate

CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]

"STRAW BOYS."

IN the old days "Straw Boys" were a terror in Ireland—they had a "captain" and each one was known by his number. They disguised themselves with straw helmets and straw on their bodies and legs, and when they had a grudge against anyone they took the opportunity of a wedding to go and "raise" a row, which often ended in a party fight. They drank everything which was provided for the guests, and it was looked upon as a mark of disrespect to the house visited. Often the police had to attend weddings on their account. Nowadays this is all changed, and "Straw Boys" are considered one of the attractions at a wedding. They neither eat nor drink in the house, but all call upon the bride to dance. They rarely stay more than two hours and no "rows" are permitted. They turn their coats inside out, disguise their voice, and wear a straw helmet similar to the one shown above.

CAN YOU DO THIS?

LAST month we set our readers the following puzzle :—

BEATTY HAIG.

With one stroke of the pen change the above into a well-known line in Shakespeare.

Here is the answer :—

BEATTY HAIG.

"In little room confining mighty men."

HENRY V., Epilogue.

"ARRIVALS"—A NEW GAME.

ONE of the company is chosen as footman and announces visitors in the following manner :—

"Mr. and Mrs. Sota and Miss——"

Whoever first fills in the blank becomes footman. The word inserted must indicate a son or daughter—as in above instance, "Minnie Sota," and must be a well-known word, geographical or otherwise, as chosen.

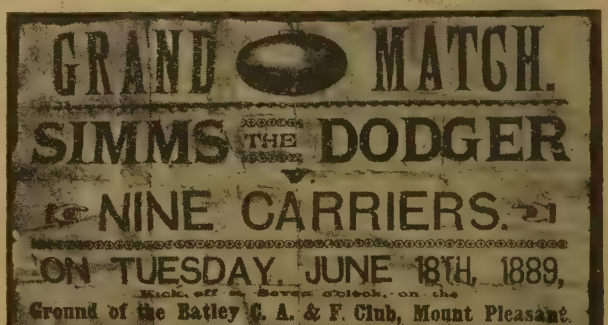
The game causes much fun, so should be welcome in these strenuous times.

Here are a few examples :—

Ho	.. Ida Ho.	Chovy	.. Ann Chovy.
Ouri	.. Miss Ouri.	Donna	.. Bella Donna.
Tucket	.. Nan Tucket.	Vere	.. Percy Vere.
Onica	.. Sal Onica.	Full	.. Grace Full.
Resco	.. Alf Resco.	Ryot	.. Pat Ryot.
Incense	.. Frank Incense.	Tant	.. Milly Tant.
Ander	.. Phil Ander	Able	.. Amy and Honor Able.
Ovar	.. Sam Ovar.		
Chief	.. Miss Chief.		

ONE MAN BEATS NINE AT FOOTBALL.

HERE is a photograph of a poster of a football match between Mr. Herbert Simms and Nine Carriers, which took place on Tuesday afternoon, June 18th, 1889, the proceeds being for the local hospital. Mr. Simms was a popular three-quarter back at that time, being known as "Simms the Dodger," as he was a very elusive player. The result of the match was four goals one try to four goals, Mr. Simms thus beating the Nine Carriers by one try. Mr. Simms has long ago retired, but is still in good health.—Mr. R. Stubbs, Mayman Lane, Batley, Yorks.


GRAND MATCH.
SIMMS THE DODGER
NINE CARRIERS.
ON TUESDAY, JUNE 18TH, 1889,
Kick off a Seven o'clock, on the
Ground of the Batley C. A. & F. Club, Mount Pleasant.
PROCEEDS TO THE BENEFIT OF BATLEY COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

Last Month's Bridge Problem Solution.

TRICK 1.—A leads ace of hearts!

TRICK 2.—A leads king of diamonds, B wins with ace!

TRICK 3.—B leads small diamond, A trumps with king!

TRICK 4.—A leads 5 of trumps, won by Z. (B throws club.)

TRICK 5.—Z must lead a spade, and B wins next two tricks in that suit, and it follows that according to Y's discard either B wins his last diamond or A makes two clubs; thus Y Z make one trick only—the 9 of trumps.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for August, 1918.

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The Index to Volume 55 can be obtained on application to the Publisher.

Most of the Original Drawings of the Illustrations in this Magazine are for sale. Terms may be had on application to the Cliché Department, George Newnes, Ltd., 8-11, Southampton Street, Strand, W.C.

"Viyella"

(Regd. Trade Mark).

The All-British Washing Material.

Unequalled for Comfort and Durability.

If you are unable to obtain, write to the Manufacturers for name of nearest or most suitable Retailer.

Wm. Hollins & Co., Ltd. (Trade only), 122a, Viyella House, Newgate Street, London, E.C.1.

"'*GOTT IN HIMMEL!* A WOMAN!' CRIED THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE."

(*See page* 85.)

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. 56. AUGUST, 1918. No. 332.

Miss Doris's "Raffles."

By JACK BOYLE.

Illustrated by W. H. D. Koerner and Dudley Tennant.

WANTED—Thoroughly efficient safe-breaker immediately. One used to taking risks. Remuneration ample; apply at once, please. Address Box 2430, "Blade."

THE advertisement was tucked away inconspicuously in the lower corner of one of the pages of a morning newspaper. Blackie read it once—then again, slowly, word by word, with steadily-increasing interest. Fine wrinkling lines, half of perplexity, half of amusement, showed at the corners of his eyes and across his forehead.

"'Wanted, a safe-breaker,'" he repeated, scarcely aware he spoke aloud. "Well, I've played the game for many a long year, but that's a new one to me."

"Wanted, a what?" asked Mary, wife and pal of the man whose adventures as a second "Raffles" were part of the police-records in a hundred cities.

"A safe-breaker," Blackie answered. "It's an extraordinary advertisement, even more extraordinarily worded, if one reads between the lines. Listen!"

He read the advertisement aloud slowly. Mary laughed as he finished.

"There's an opportunity for some hard-working burglar temporarily out of employment," she said. "No references required, either. It is a curious advertisement."

Then after a moment's pause she added:—

"I wonder why *she* wants a safe-breaker?"

Blackie's eyes lighted with admiring approval as he noted Mary's choice in personal pronouns.

"You see it just as I do," he said. "A woman did write that ad.—an utterly inexperienced woman, too ingenuous to suspect that the last thing in this world any ordinary burglar will do is to answer it. It's a typically impractical feminine inspiration born of some desperately pressing necessity. The lady's S.O.S. call interests me exceedingly. I wonder who and what she is? 'Efficient' and 'Remuneration'—those terms suggest a correct sense of word values. They eliminate the sordid and illiterate absolutely. But it is in the use of 'please' that the writer of this ad. reveals her sex and her dire need. No man would conclude an invitation to a safe-breaker with 'please.' Mary, I'm going to answer that ad."

Mary, with the thought of the present peace and security of their apartment in her mind, sighed but made no protest. She knew the man she loved neither would nor could resist the lure of such a curiously novel adventure—for love of adventure rather than cupidity is, after all, the real force that chains the master-minds of the powers that prey to the crooked game.

Blackie's reply to the ad. was tersely business-like. It informed "Box 2430, *Blade*," that communication with a safe-breaker might be opened by inserting a reply in the *Blade*, giving a 'phone-number to be called at six the following evening. It concluded with this paragraph:—

"As you may consider it imprudent to publish a 'phone-number, I suggest that you add one to each figure in your real number. For instance, if your 'phone is Main 684, your reply should read Main 795."

In the *Blade* next morning Blackie, eagerly expectant as a boy on Christmas morning, found this ad.:—

"*West 9367. Please do not fail.*"

The eager, nervous voice that answered him over the wire was ample proof he had the right connection. It was the voice of a young girl, he judged instantly—a voice whose delicacy of tone even in its obvious excitement proved the correctness of his original conclusion that he was within touch of a mystery worth probing to an end he was unable to guess.

"Are you the man who answered my ad.?" the voice queried, anxiously; and then without waiting for an answer: "I do hope you are. I was afraid you might change your mind and not call me, and I must have a safe—a man of the kind I specified, at once. You are that kind, aren't you?"

Blackie wasted a smile on the unseeing 'phone-transmitter. The interrogation and the voice together dispelled a last supercautious doubt.

"I obtained your number from your reply," he admitted.

"I am so glad," said the voice, eagerly. "I must see you at once—somewhere in town—but where?"

There was a long pause. Blackie, waiting in

silent amusement, refrained deliberately from offering a solution. He was curious to learn where and how a girl, well-bred and refined, would find it possible to meet an unknown safe-breaker for the purpose of employing his professional services.

"Where shall I say? It must be public. What *shall* I do?" the anxious voice demanded at last. "I don't want you to misunderstand, but—but——" Then, with the frankness of utter desperation: "Don't you see that until I have seen you, I can't possibly decide where I can see you?"

Blackie laughed—aloud this time. To him the unknown girl's predicament was perfectly plain. She couldn't guess whether the safe-breaker her mysterious necessity demanded might be expected to be a beetle-browed individual in frayed trousers and a tattered coat or one who would pass muster in a crowd.

"I think I understand," he said. "Being unfamiliar with the appearance and taste in clothes of men of a certain profession, you are unable to determine where we can talk without attracting undue attention. I suggest Morton's," he added, naming a restaurant of the staidest reputation.

"Yes, yes—Morton's will do perfectly," came back over the wire. "If you know Morton's, that assures me it is exactly the right place. Will you come at once? It is dreadfully important to save even minutes."

"I will be there in half an hour," Blackie replied. "For whom shall I inquire?"

"For Miss Macon—Miss Doris Macon," the voice informed him. "You won't fail to come?"

"Certainly not," answered Blackie, as he hung up the receiver.

Blackie found Miss Doris Macon at one of the alcove tables in Morton's main dining-room.

"It is kind of you to come to town to oblige me," she said, extending a dainty hand with the air of one greeting an intimate acquaintance, as Jules, the head-waiter, seated her visitor.

"On the contrary, the kindness lies in your permission which allows me to do so," answered Blackie, catching the cue contained in a remark evidently intended for the waiter's ears. Then, that functionary having withdrawn, Blackie gazed across the top of the menu in his hand and met the eyes of the girl who needed the services of a safe-breaker.

The two looked at each other in silent, intent, frankly undisguised appraisement.

Doris Macon saw in the safe-breaker a well-tailored, oldishly young man with the clean-cut facial lines of a coldly practical business faculty and the keenly penetrating but indefinably introspective eyes of a student and dreamer—eyes which, as they studied hers, she knew were probing and cataloguing her with inevitable accuracy.

Blackie saw a young girl slender and decidedly attractive, though her appeal, he thought, lay rather more in mental than physical charm. Her eyes were dark, serious, and more than a little frightened, and he saw in them the inspired light of an imagination that had conceived a great adventure and undertaken it courageously for a great stake. She was well but not expensively dressed, and Blackie, in the glance that took in every detail of her appearance, noted that the only jewel she wore was a solitaire diamond on the third finger of her left hand.

Without a spoken word each read the other's approving verdict. In recognition of this intuitive understanding, the girl smiled.

"You're not a detective or a newspaper reporter, or just a curious busybody like the silly meddlers who have tried to-day by the dozen to discover who I am and why I advertised as I did," she said, eagerly. "I'm sure you're not, now that I've seen you. And if you really are a man who can open a safe, you are the only one of that kind among more than fifty who answered my ad., Mr. ——" She stopped, waiting for him to supply the missing name.

"Suppose we say Smith. It has the advantage of being easy to remember," said Blackie, smilingly. "And thank you for your quick decision that I am neither a reporter nor a detective—particularly the latter. I assure you I am not."

The girl, still leaning forward, clasped her fingers before her in an unconsciously appealing gesture and spoke low and hurriedly.

"Mr. Smith," she said, "I know all this must seem impossibly strange and bizarre to you. It's so terribly unconventional—my advertising as I did, my meeting you like this. I've never thought before that I could do such a thing——"

"That was evident from the first word you spoke to me over the phone," interjected Blackie.

"But now I'm forced to adopt desperate means in a desperate crisis," the girl continued, ignoring the interruption. "It's a last forlorn hope, this that I'm doing to-night, and oh, Mr. Smith, so much—so very, very much—depends on it. Will you help, please?"

The earnestness of this strange young woman's even stranger plea was beyond question.

"Hadn't you better tell me precisely what is required to remedy this desperate difficulty of which you speak?" suggested Blackie.

Her voice dropped to a whisper.

"There's a wall-safe in the study of a certain residence. In it is something that we——" Quickly she corrected herself and altered the plural pronoun, a faint, confused flush dyeing her cheeks. "Something that I must have! I want you to open that safe for me to-night. I will pay you well for it."

"Just what is this extremely important Something within the safe that interests you? Money—jewels—papers?" he asked at last.

"No, no, nothing like that. I'm not a thief."

"Then the contents of this safe belong to you?"

The girl hesitated in evident indecision.

"Not exactly—that is, not legally. But morally we have a right to them—the very best right in the world." There was the surety of absolute conviction in her words.

Blackie laughed whole-heartedly.

"I must confess that I also am a disciple of the moral-right doctrine as distinguished from legal

right," he said. "But that's a deep subject and a dangerous one. There's quite a serious prejudice among the police and the public against assuming the possession of property owned solely by moral right. This interesting Something you own morally but not lawfully is—what?"

"You mustn't ask me that. I can't tell you—not even if I knew, and I really don't."

"You don't know what it is you wish taken from the safe you ask me to break open for you?" cried Blackie, now truly surprised.

The girl shook her head.

"I do not," she said. "I only know that whatever is in that safe, we must have at any cost and at any risk."

Blackie settled back in his chair and waited while their dinner was served.

"After this, nothing you may say or do will surprise me," he observed, when the waiter was safely out of hearing. "You advertise for a safe-breaker; you dine with him; you offer him a huge price to open a safe; and the safe being successfully opened, you tell me your plan is to take from it something to which you assert a moral right—though you haven't an idea what you will find. Have I stated your rather astounding proposition correctly?"

The girl made a slight despairing gesture.

"Correctly, yes, but so terribly analytically, so terribly unfeelingly," she said, her former hopefulness slumping sharply at Blackie's coldly practical summing up of the situation. "I know it's strange. I know it's incomprehensible; but oh, Mr. Smith, please, please don't deny my request. So much is at stake—so very much more than anyone who doesn't know can possibly imagine."

She laid two tiny hands on the table, palms upward, in a movement irresistibly appealing.

"Before I saw you," she continued, "I was almost hopeless. I'm only a girl and not worldly-wise, but I know enough to realize how such a proposition as mine must sound to any ordinary man, whether he be a safe-breaker or a banker. But when I saw you, I began to hope again. I began to think that a wonderful piece of fortune might have sent me the one man in a thousand who would listen—the one man in a thousand with imagination and understanding enough to know that no girl like me would attempt what I have without being so sure she was right that she couldn't be wrong. You mustn't question me, for I can't answer without breaking faith. I can't explain except to say this matter is vital—vital to you as well as to me, if only you could know."

Again she leaned toward him with all the ardour of a woman pleading a sacred cause.

"Won't you be that one man in a thousand, Mr. Smith?" she begged, softly, persuasively. "Won't you take me and my Arabian Nights project on trust? Won't you break open that safe for me?"

"Permit me one question," he said, after a moment's thought. "Does the man for whom you're doing this know you're doing it? Has he ordered or permitted it?"

"No, no," she cried. "Bob doesn't know. He wouldn't let me if he did. He hasn't the faintest idea I have even thought of a plan."

She flushed deeply as she realized the completeness of the admission into which the utterly unexpected question had surprised her.

"How did you know?" she added. "How did you guess there is—well—well—anyone?" Prettily concealing lashes hid her eyes.

"Well," said Blackie, judicially, "my conclusion was based on the assumption that when any woman—particularly one wearing a diamond on her engagement-finger—undertakes such an impossible quixotic adventure as this, the famous Sherlock Holmes axiom '*Cherchez la femme*' necessarily must alter itself into '*Cherchez l'homme.*' So Bob doesn't know, eh, and wouldn't permit it if he did?"

A negative shake of a bowed head was his only answer.

"Has it occurred to you, Miss Macon, that there are certain extremely practical and necessary precautions that are absolutely requisite to the success of such little nocturnal expeditions as the one you propose—always presuming one is not seeking long-term employment with the State?" Blackie inquired. "For instance, men who open other men's safes must learn in advance the make and size of the strong-box to know what tools are necessary."

"The safe's a fifteen-by-fifteen Babcock wall-safe of this year's make—the very latest," the girl answered without hesitation.

"Good!" said Blackie, suppressing new surprise. "And also it is advisable to know beforehand what electrical protection, if any, it has."

"An ordinary Cummings burglar-alarm that rings if the combination dial is turned. One snip with a pair of pliers on the wires, and it's harmless."

"You're the most practical impractical girl I've ever met," said the burglar, with real admiration. "Perhaps you know, too, the habits of the household?"

"The owner will be away to-night. He's out of town and can't be back within twenty-four hours. That's why it must be done to-night. The servants retire early, particularly when their master is away. There is no one else in the house."

Miss Macon's joy in the possession of this desired information was undisguised.

"I thought of other things, too," she added. "Here's a plan of the study in which the safe is—arrangement of furniture and all."

Then, delving again into her hand-bag, she produced a curiously complicated key.

"And this is a duplicate latchkey to a side door which opens directly into the study from the street. I collected these things on the faint chance that I might find my one man in a thousand who is willing to open that safe for me," she concluded, with appealing wistfulness.

Blackie glanced at the blueprint, ran his finger speculatively over the intricate ratchet of the proffered key, and then handed both back to the girl across the table, who waited, breathless with anxiety, for him to speak. He summoned the waiter and paid the bill.

"Miss Macon," he said, "I want to thank you for the most interesting hour I can remember. You first amused me, then interested me, and now completely amaze me. I really wish I could aid you, but a girl as clever as you are is too clever not to realize that a proposition such as yours—one in which you ask a man to risk his liberty blindly—one that even may be a police-trap—one——"

"But it isn't—it isn't," she cried, resentfully. "Surely you can't believe me capable of planning such perfidy against a man of whom I beg aid."

"You are too clever not to realize that a proposition such as yours," repeated Blackie, imperturbably, "is absolutely the most impossible, quixotic, reckless, foolhardy, and femininely impractical one I ever heard or expect to hear. Any man who would consider it is capable of walking into the penitentiary with eyes wide open."

"You won't do it?" she whispered, her voice breaking under the flood of disappointment that swept over her. "You won't do it—and you were my last chance!"

Tears showed on her lashes.

"And so," Blackie went on, "because your proposition to me is all I have called it—and considerably more—I'll accept it."

He leaned toward her and lowered his voice.

"Miss Macon," he said, "I'm going to open that safe for you to-night."

Doris Macon, her eyes still brimming with tears, forgot that young ladies accustomed to dining at Morton's do not clasp and squeeze their escorts' hands across public dining-tables. She caught Blackie's in hers and most undeniably and brazenly pressed them.

"You have saved all of us," she whispered, gently. "I knew you would be my one man in a thousand. Now, I've just one more request."

Ten minutes of pleading by the girl—ten minutes of slowly weakening refusal by Blackie; then with a gesture of resignation he capitulated.

"Very well," he said. "I agree. Have it your own way."

At a quarter before midnight Blackie loitered along a certain street, studying the passing stream of traffic with a casual but watchful eye. In an inner pocket was a two-ounce bottle of nitroglycerine—"soup" to members of the craft that use it. In another pocket was a tin of mushy soap; in still another pocket were a couple of fulminating caps and a coil of fuse. Slung beneath his left arm was a revolver, heavy-barrelled, and equally efficacious as a bludgeon or firearm.

He was waiting for Miss Doris Macon; and as he waited, the night's events, past and to come, revolved in his mind as he sought futilely to grasp some loose thread that would be the starting point for a solution of the mystery that involved her.

Her final demand had been that she should be permitted to accompany him and participate personally in breaking open the safe.

It was unheard-of, and yet—— Instinctively he recognized that some driving necessity, not a whim, was responsible for the earnest, insistent plea to which, at last and reluctantly, he had acceded. To a professional burglar the expedition, outwardly at least, suggested no unusual hazards. But to a young girl—a girl of refinement and the sphere of life to which Doris Macon unmistakably belonged—the possible consequences of the risk were ruinous. She admitted this, but persisted in her assertion that circumstances made it unavoidable. Somehow Blackie felt her judgment might be right.

"One of two things is true," he thought. "Either there is far more at stake to-night than even I suspect, or she is the victim of some black-hearted scoundrel who is sending a young girl to do a job he doesn't dare attempt himself. Either way, now that I've started, I'll see her through without harm."

A handsome electric car swerved into the kerb and stopped. Blackie stepped toward it; then as he glimpsed the person within, he hesitated in sudden suspicion. The figure was not the one he expected. He saw a capped and goggled driver in a long raincoat from beneath which he caught sight of slender legs unmistakably encased in trousers.

As he stood irresolute for a second, the door of the car was swung open and a soft voice called him.

"Get in, Mr. Smith," it said. Unquestionably the voice was Miss Doris Macon's.

Blackie entered the car, pulled the door shut, turned toward the girl deliberately, and inspected her from head to foot.

She wore a motor-cap over a close-fitting, short-cropped wig. Huge goggles hid her eyes and all her face except the delicate curves of lips and chin. Heavy gloves covered her hands. As his eyes fell to the slim, trouser-covered legs that showed beneath the end of her long coat, she drew its concealing folds closer around her.

"Don't," she commanded, turning her head to hide a deepening flush. "Please don't stare so. I know they're terrible, but they're necessary—just this once."

"And still some people assert crime doesn't pay a man," said Blackie, as if speaking to himself.

As they turned into Broadway, Miss Macon was forced to check her car's speed sharply to avoid smashing into a suddenly slowing vehicle ahead.

As the car sped on, neither of its occupants noted another car that now was following unobtrusively a block behind.

"We're almost there," said Miss Macon, twenty minutes after the town flare of light had faded behind them into the more modest illumination of a residential section.

"Good!" said her companion, rousing himself from the reverie which had eliminated conversation during the ride. "Drive past the house slowly but without stopping and point it out to me. I want to look it over and then take a glance at that professionally prepared blueprint you have."

"That's the house—the corner one with the two entrances," she said, a moment later.

"So that's where the study is, with the precious safe in it, eh!" the burglar answered, glancing at

the girl curiously with a queer, half-enlightened look in his eyes. "I think I recognize it."

"You probably do, if you read the papers," Miss Macon said, and lapsed into silence.

Blackie turned again towards the house, memorizing each detail of its location and architecture.

"If you are right about the owner of that house being absent overnight, it looks decidedly easy," Blackie said.

"He left this afternoon," said the girl.

"He's not married? You are sure there are no womenfolks in the house?" queried Blackie.

"Never," answered Miss Macon, "except occasionally when he gives the entertainments of which you probably have read."

"Then half an hour after his servants are asleep, the absent gentleman's safe will be open and its contents in your hands."

"It doesn't seem possible it really can be true, not even now when I know it is," cried the girl, her hands trembling on the steering-bar. "If we find what is in that room, Mr. Smith, it——"

She checked the revelation on her lips.

"I wish I could tell you," she said, smiling her confidence to him. "If it were only my own secret, I would, but it concerns far bigger and graver things than either of us—things I have no right even to know, much less to tell."

The residence was dark from cellar to garret. Blackie glanced at his watch.

"Now we'll get to work," said Blackie.

Under his instructions Miss Macon installed the car in the partial shelter of an alley-way half a street from their goal; then Blackie laid a fatherly hand on her arm.

"Miss Macon," he said, gently, "you can be of much more service here in the car than inside the house. I'm likely to need this car in circumstances in which seconds may mean escape or capture. If you will wait here, I'll bring you whatever is in that safe, unopened, exactly as it comes into my hands. There is no need for you to risk more, surely."

"No, that won't do," the girl contradicted. "If we find what we want, it may be necessary for me to swear I took it from that safe with my own hands. I'm going with you, please."

Blackie looked at her gloomily.

"All right," he said. "Turn round, please."

He knotted a handkerchief loosely round her neck.

"If anything happens while we are in the house—if we are interrupted in any way—slip that up over the lower part of your face," he instructed. "You mustn't be recognized as a woman, whatever happens, and your mouth and chin would betray you."

He drew a pair of rubber hospital gloves from a pocket and put them on.

"Keep on your gauntlets," he commanded. "Only amateurs leave finger-prints, and we're both professionals to-night."

From his coat pocket he drew a cap with a mask dropping from its visor. He doubled the mask out of sight in the crown and put on the cap, stowing his soft hat away in a pocket. Then he threw open his coat and examined the disclosed revolver and slipped it back into its holster. The girl shuddered as the light fell on the barrel of the weapon.

"I pray you won't have to use that," she whispered.

"So do I," said Blackie. "Well, we're ready. Come on. We'll walk once round the block and make a last inspection before we go in."

As they crossed the street, the headlights of a car that had halted behind caught them in its glare for a second.

"Another car has stopped," warned the girl, catching at his arm.

"I saw it. It doesn't matter," said Blackie, without interest.

Neither gave the second car another thought, though it was the one that had followed them, trailing behind throughout each of the devious turnings they had made during the night.

Blackie's inspection of the house seemed to satisfy him. At the foot of the steps leading to the study door he paused.

"When we are inside, don't speak or interfere or make the slightest noise, no matter what happens," he said to his amateur helper. "If I am interrupted or there is any alarm, don't wait for anything or anybody. Run for your car and get home without thinking of speed laws. Never mind me. I'll look out for myself. And also, while we're inside, obey me implicitly. Will you?"

"Yes, I promise," said the girl, between teeth that chattered in spite of herself.

Blackie, with Miss Macon at his elbow, slipped up to the door with a step noiseless as a cat's. The room was dark as a tomb. The safe-breaker laid his ear over the keyhole and listened. Then with a touch as delicate as a musician's, he slipped the key into the lock and opened the door inch by inch without making a sound audible a yard away. With one foot on the threshold, he studied the room foot by foot with eyes that gradually pierced the darkness and ears ready instantly to detect the sound of breathing in its Stygian gloom.

Sure now that the room was empty, he stepped inside, motioned the girl in after him, and closed the door as carefully as he had opened it. He beckoned her to a chair and went over the room again, quickly, thoroughly, throwing the sharp rays of a fountain-pen flash-lamp here and there at intervals. Opposite the door through which they had entered was another, opening into a reception-hall. Blackie closed and locked this door with a master-key he selected from a bunch.

The study had two bay-window alcoves, one at the front, the other at the side. Both were draped with *portières* that hung partly across them in heavy folds. Taking Miss Macon's hand, he led her to the alcove nearest the street door and gently pushed her behind the concealing drapery.

"Stay here," he whispered. She nodded.

Then he turned his attention to the safe. It was built in the wall opposite the alcoves. He studied it inch by inch with his flash-lamp and then turned the tiny gleam on the panelled woodwork beside it and continued his scrutiny.

irresistible force of the explosive behind it tore it from its place. He then crossed the room to his trembling companion and laid a reassuring hand on her arm.

"Everything is ready," he whispered. "Don't be frightened, and don't move or make a sound after the explosion. Above all, don't scream. There will be a noise no louder than a firecracker, a puff of smoke—and the door will fall into that chair. Then we'll take what we want and go."

Evidently he found what he was seeking, for he knelt and ripped up the heavy carpet where it touched the wall. Beneath it two wires appeared, leading down from the woodwork beside the safe. These he severed, one by one, with the greatest care; then he rose and went to work on the safe itself with the dexterous surety of a master-workman.

Watching breathlessly from her hiding-place, Miss Macon saw him carefully cement the crack round the safe door with the mushy soap he took from his pocket. Next, at the upper left-hand corner, he fashioned a tiny soap-cup opening into the one spot in the crack about the door not yet made air-tight. He drew out a bottle and with great caution measured out the liquid drop by drop into a graduated glass such as druggists use. The contents of this glass he poured into the soap-cup and watched it soak slowly through the crack into the safe. When the last drop had disappeared, he fixed a cap and a piece of fuse over the crack through which the explosive had vanished, and fastened it in its place securely with more soap. Then he inspected his work carefully with the flash-lamp and seemed satisfied.

Blackie next moved a large upholstered arm-chair up before the safe, placing it carefully to catch the strong-box door noiselessly when the

He returned to the fuse dangling from the safe door, struck a match, and lighted it.

With the hypnotic fascination of one looking into the eyes of a creeping beast about to spring, the girl watched the spitting flame crawl upward toward the cap. Blackie, with a satisfied glance over his work, crossed the room and took refuge in the second alcove as the fuse burned sputteringly.

The fire was within a couple of inches of the cap, and Miss Macon was nerving herself for the ordeal of the explosion, when quick steps ascended the stone stairs outside the door through which they had entered. A key sounded in the lock. The whistled air of a gay Viennese waltz-tune floated in from without the door.

One quick glance at the half-inch of remaining fuse showed Blackie the impossibility of preventing the explosion. He sprang across the room to the frankly terror-stricken girl.

"Here comes the man who should be away," he whispered. "He's just in time to see us open his safe. Keep absolutely still and out of sight, and leave him to me."

He darted to his own hiding-place as the door

was flung open and a square-shouldered, blondly handsome man of early middle age stepped into the room and switched on the lights.

There was a dull flash, a sharp explosion—and the door of the safe bulged outward and dropped exactly in the centre of the chair set to receive it; an acrid, choking cloud of smoke rolled out from within the safe and drifted across the room.

The new-comer staggered backward and reeled against the wall as the explosion flashed in his face. Then, finding himself unhurt, he spat out a fierce oath and glanced once toward the safe. Sight of the wreckage seemed to madden him beyond the possibility of coherent thought or action. He looked quickly about the room, and seeing no intruders, he sprang to a massive phonograph that stood in a corner, threw open its doors, and peered within.

"Robbers! Police! Police!" he screamed, in a voice calculated to rouse the whole block. "Fritz! Siegel! Come, come quickly. Robbers!"

There was a rush of hurrying feet beyond the locked door that led into the rest of the house, and heavy fists began to hammer on its panels. The blond man dashed about the room, throwing open desk-doors, sweeping papers and books to the floor, and screaming more loudly each moment as he sought to reassure himself his property was still intact.

Blackie, watching from behind the *portière* with every muscle tense, waited with clubbed revolver-barrel for the infuriated house-owner to come within reach.

Meanwhile the smoke-cloud had drifted to and enveloped the hiding-place of Miss Macon. Nothing is more overpoweringly choking than the fumes of exploded nitro-glycerine. Inevitably the cowering girl coughed.

The sound caught the quick ear of the raging man whose unexpected return was responsible for the *contretemps*. He sprang to the *portières* and dragged them to the floor, revealing a masked and boyish figure holding a plaything revolver in a shaking hand.

"Put up your hands," commanded the suddenly exposed burglar, in a surprisingly quaking voice.

"*Gott in Himmel!* A woman!" cried the owner of the house, for though the figure at first glance was youthfully masculine, the voice unmistakably was feminine.

The blond man leaped at Miss Macon and seized the wrist of the hand that held the revolver. One quick wrench, and it was snapped from her fingers and fell to the floor. With his other hand the man reached for her throat, and as she instinctively lowered her head, his heavy fingers clutched her cap. A wrench—then cap and wig were torn from her head, leaving the girl unmasked and with her own long and dishevelled hair streaming about her, to face the man she would have robbed.

Just then Blackie's revolver-barrel crashed solidly against the man's skull from behind. He groaned; his knees sagged; and he crumpled up on the floor no longer an adversary to be reckoned with. His fingers still tightly clutched the girl's cap and wig.

Blackie stooped over the form for the fraction of a second to make sure he was safely unconscious. In the hall-way the shouting servants were now battering at the study door with an axe.

With a cry to the girl to run to the car, Blackie turned and saw her at the safe frantically seizing packages of papers, which she thrust into her pockets.

In spite of their desperately imminent danger, he smiled at her undaunted courage and

"SPITTING JETS OF FLAME FROM MORE THAN ONE REVOLVER FOLLOWED THE FUGITIVES AS THEY FLED ACROSS THE STREET TO THEIR CAR."

determination. He made a hurried circuit of the room as if seeking something lost—then called again for her to go.

"I will. I've everything now," she answered, and ran into the street, Blackie following, as the study door was burst open and the servants poured pell-mell into the room.

Spitting jets of flames from more than one revolver followed the fugitives as they fled across the street and down to their car. Farther away, Blackie heard the *rat-a-tat-tat* on the pavement of a policeman's stick sending out the S.O.S. hurry-call that in five minutes would have the whole district hemmed in and wagon-loads of reserves on the way to the scene.

He seized the girl, lifted her bodily into her car, and leaped after her.

"Drive with every ounce of power in this car," he cried.

The car shot out of the alley and down the street.

"Two streets down, then two across town," commanded Blackie, as they gained speed. "A zigzag course and more speed if you can."

He glanced at the girl. Her unbound hair was flying behind her. Her raincoat was ripped to her waist, revealing a woman's shirtwaist above boy's trousers. She was without hat or goggles.

"If a policeman gets one glimpse of you, Miss Macon," he said, smiling grimly, "he won't have to guess who we are and what we've just done. He'll know. Can't you get more speed?"

"The control is wide open," she gasped, huskily. "Isn't there a car chasing us? I thought I saw the machine that was standing near the house start as we did."

"Yes, there's a car coming behind us. Run away from it if you can."

They had rounded several corners when Blackie noticed that their speed was sharply diminishing.

"You're slowing down," he cried. "Don't lose your nerve."

"No, no, but the car won't run as it should. It's losing power every second."

She turned a ghastly white face toward him as the crushing realization of the cause of the trouble flashed into her mind.

"I told my garage man to charge the batteries this afternoon. He hasn't done it," she confessed.

Blackie glanced behind them.

"Whirl round this next corner, drive to the kerb, and stop. We can't travel in this machine a moment longer."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. It's all my fault," the girl sobbed.

"Don't worry. Do as I tell you," Blackie commanded, peremptorily.

Miss Macon obeyed, and the car stopped beside the kerbstone in a street as yet unalarmed by the uproar. Almost as they stopped, the pursuing machine whirled round the corner and came to a standstill beside them with a sharp grinding of brakes.

"Let us in quick, Mary," said Blackie to the woman at the wheel. "This car's out of petrol. It always pays to have a safety anchor or two out when one plays this game, doesn't it?"

Mary without a word threw open the door. Blackie caught Miss Macon in his arms and lifted her in, tossing a package after her. He took one quick glance over the deserted car, then sprang in beside the girl.

"We're off, Mary," he said. "Zigzag into town and remember you'll have to beat the police or they'll be holding us up before we can get home."

Mary nodded, and the car leaped forward and shot out into the night.

Ten minutes later, with half-a-dozen streets between them and the riot from which they were fleeing, Blackie told Mary to slow down. For the first time since abandoning the car he looked across toward the girl who was the cause of the nearly disastrous expedition. Miss Macon was huddled against the cushions with the papers taken from the safe spread in her lap. As Blackie turned to her, she dropped her head across her arms and moaned heartbrokenly.

"What's wrong?" Blackie asked. "The trouble is all over."

The girl shook her head.

"It isn't. It hasn't even begun," she sobbed. "What I counted on finding, what I have risked everything to get, isn't here. There are nothing but worthless old bills and accounts and receipts among these papers."

She raised a white, frightened face.

"I've ruined the man I love," she said, poignant anguish burdening every word. "They'll find my car and identify it. They have my cap and wig. Captain von Hoffmeier will recognize me too, for he saw my face as he pulled off my mask. This will ruin Mr. Melchoir, for we are engaged, and no one will ever believe I planned all this myself."

She clasped her hands beseechingly.

"Oh, Bob, Bob," she sobbed, "what have I done! I only wanted to help you. I was so sure I would find the proof you needed, and now I've ruined you and wrecked your career. Why did I do it? Why did I do it?"

She sank down, hiding her face in the cushions.

"Drive straight home, Mary," said Blackie. "We three have started something that will have to be finished somehow."

The hour of the night and an automatic lift combined to make it possible to smuggle the dishevelled Miss Macon unnoticed into Blackie's apartment.

"Now, Miss Macon," Blackie began, the moment the door closed after them, "it seems that, with the best intentions in the world, we three have managed to make matters worse instead of better for someone to-night."

"A hundred times worse!" the girl said. "Bob's instructions were positive that no overt act against Hoffmeier must be committed without conclusive evidence of what we know but can't prove. They will dismiss him from the Service disgraced for what has happened to-night."

"Bob's instructions come from headquarters, do they? I've thought so ever since I recognized the house we entered to-night. Your Bob Melchoir, I suppose, is Robert L. Melchoir of the foreign division of the Secret Service?"

"Yes," she said. "I might as well tell you,

for you've guessed it, anyway, and besides, somehow I feel as if I had known you folks all my life and could trust you absolutely, even though we met but last evening."

"This raid on Captain von Hoffmeier's safe concerns international affairs, of course," said Blackie. "His nationality and military career make that obvious."

The girl nodded.

"Exactly what proof did you hope to obtain to-night? I don't ask from curiosity. There may be a way out yet. Don't be afraid to speak, for that's the only possible chance now."

Miss Macon looked at him in silent indecision.

"I'll tell you," she said at last, "though I can't see how anything can help now. The proof we wanted was evidence that instructions for burning munition-plants and factories and the like are issued from the German Embassy to the underlings who carry them out."

"How does it happen that you are in possession of such knowledge?"

"The matter, so far as it concerned Captain von Hoffmeier, one of the chief German propagandists here, was placed in Bob's hands," she explained. "He and I are to be married, and often when puzzled he has talked his cases over with me and I have been able to help him. He always says I find ways of solving matters no man could ever think of. This has been his greatest case, and we've talked it over again and again.

"Bob dared not raid Von Hoffmeier's house without having absolutely definite knowledge of what he would find. I could, and because I thought I knew the proof we sought was in that safe, I advertised for you. The rest you know."

"If you had that proof, it would solve the whole muddle," said Blackie. "That would make it possible for Melchoir to assume responsibility for what happened to-night, wouldn't it?"

"Surely; but we haven't the proof, and now there's no hope we ever will get it," the girl replied, wearily.

Blackie picked up a package he had carried from the car and tossed into a chair. It contained a dozen or more phonograph-record discs.

"Do these mean anything to you, Miss Macon?" he asked. "I took them from the German's talking-machine after I struck him down."

She shook her head sadly.

"I know about them. They came from an underling in the German Embassy, but they are just ordinary records," she said. "They have been sending packages of records back and forth for a long time, and at first Bob suspected them, but the parcels were opened in the post-offic , and nothing wrong was found. Bob even had them played to make sure they hadn't been tampered with."

"There *is* something wrong with them," asserted Blackie.

"How do you know?" she cried, with new hope.

"Captain von Hoffmeier himself told me."

"Captain von Hoffmeier told you?" she repeated, incredulously.

"Yes by rushing first of all to his phonograph cabinet to see if these records were safe after the explosion. He scarcely gave the safe a glance. Why? Obviously because the only thing he feared to lose was in the phonograph and not in the safe. The proof you want lies right here in my lap," concluded Blackie.

"He did rush to the phonograph! I remember that too," cried the girl, with rising excitement.

"Yes, and because he did, I emptied that music-machine completely. I even took the sound-box on it while you were clearing out the safe. Somewhere in this pile is what you want. Our task is to find how it is hidden. We'll try one of these records on our machine—which, by the way, happens to be a Warwick, the same as his."

Blackie put on the top record and started the motor The strains of a Hungarian dance filled the room and continued to their conclusion without a false note. He tried the rest, one after another, with the same result. Indisputably the records seemed only the commercial article purchasable anywhere.

"You see," said Doris, hopelessly, "there's nothing wrong with them."

"But there is," asserted Blackie, undismayed by the failure. "I know there is. We haven't discovered the secret that's all. Let me study this thing out."

He examined each record with minute care. He inspected the covers that held them.

"Have these been tested for invisible writing of all kinds?" he asked.

"Every one of them," said the girl.

Blackie cast them aside and picked up the sound-box taken from Von Hoffmeier's machine.

"This box isn't used for this sort of record," he observed. "It's a Bathe sound-box, and these are all Conqueror records. The Warwick plays either kind by changing sound-boxes. It's strange, when I think it over, that he should have had this Bathe sound-box on the machine and ready for use when there is not one Bathe record in his whole collection. That's more than peculiar."

He turned the sound-box over and over, studying it speculatively. The needle which follows the grooves of the records in reproducing music caught his eyes, and he jumped to his feet and dug out the Bathe sound-box from his own machine.

"Look!" he cried. "All Bathe records are played with needles with a round sapphire point. This needle of Hoffmeier's is sharper than any I ever saw, and it has no sapphire point. I'll put it under a microscope and have a better look."

"Oh, if it only might be true!" cried Miss Macon, jumping to her feet and peering over his shoulder while Mary, equally excited, pressed forward across the table.

"It has a sapphire point," cried Blackie, after one look through the magnifying glass, "but it's a point finer than the finest pin-point. Miss Macon, I think we have it! This needle was never made to play any commercial record ever manufactured. We'll try it on Mr. Captain von Hoffmeier's collection."

"INSTEAD OF THE STRAINS OF CAPTIVATING DANCE MUSIC THAT HAD FOLLOWED THE PREVIOUS TRIAL, A SUAVE TEUTONIC VOICE BEGAN TO SPEAK IN GERMAN."

He fitted Von Hoffmeier's sound-box to his machine, put on the same Hungarian-dance record, and started the motor.

Instead of the strains of captivating dance music that had followed the previous trial, a suave Teutonic voice began to speak in German.

"Oh! Oh!" cried both women, together. "You've got it."

"What is he saying? Do you understand German? Tell me, tell me," cried Miss Macon.

Mary stooped and kissed her husband with a proud light in her eyes.

"Good old boy!" she said, fondly. "You've solved the mystery."

Blackie, listening to the commanding voice that spoke from within the machine, grew very grave.

"Do you understand it?" again cried the young girl, unable to restrain her overmastering excitement. "What is he saying?"

"I don't get it all," said Blackie, even more gravely. "My German is too rusty, but I understand enough to know you must call Melchoir on the 'phone and get him up here *quick*."

"I'll get him," cried Doris, wild with happiness. "I know his private number. Oh, isn't this the most wonderful thing that ever happened!"

"How did they do it?" asked Mary, while Miss Macon was frantically pleading with the central office to hurry her connection. "How is it possible to put two separate and distinct records on a single disc-surface?"

"Now that we know," said Blackie, "it's so simple I wonder we didn't think of it before. These Conqueror records are lateral-cut—that is, the sound-waves are made on the sides of the tiny grooves that guide the needle. The Bathe records are just the opposite. They are vertical cut, the sound-waves being on the bottom of the grooves on which the sapphire needle rests. Consequently, if you etch vertically cut sound-waves with an instrument so fine that the lateral-wave needle can't reach down to them, you get only the music originally stamped on the records—when you use a Conqueror needle and box. But when you use a sound-box adjusted for vertical waves, with a sapphire point so tiny it reaches to the bottom of the groove, you get the secret messages concealed there, without one note of the original music."

"Quite an idea that, Mary! And I never should have thought of touching these records if Von Hoffmeier himself hadn't tipped me. It took a far better brain than his to work out this scheme; that's certain."

"For that dear little girl's sake I am thankful now you answered her ad.," said Mary, kissing him again.

"And so am I for my own as well as for her sake," he answered. "She has given me a most interesting and satisfactory evening—an evening well worth remembering."

Within half an hour Bob Melchoir, Secret Service agent, was at the door of Blackie's apartment. Doris admitted him and threw herself into his arms in a burst of hysterically happy tears.

"What's all this about, Doris?" he demanded, suspiciously, as he saw Blackie and Mary. "What have you been doing, and why are you here at this hour of the night?"

"First you must meet my safe-breaker and his wife, and then I'll tell you," she promised.

"Your safe-breaker, eh?" he repeated, blankly. "Well, one thing is certain: you have selected a good one. It has been a long time since we have met, Blackie," he added, without waiting for the introduction.

"Yes—not since you were working on the post-office robbery, I think," the smiling safe-breaker said.

"Which I never have been able to prove against you, no matter what my own personal opinion in the matter may be, to this day," Melchoir added, with good humour.

"Quite correctly stated," Blackie replied, laughing.

"Now, Doris, explain this mad prank," Melchoir demanded, turning sternly to the girl who hung happily over the arm of his chair. "What are you doing here?"

"Oh, Bob," she cried, unable to keep her great news one unnecessary second, "we have the proof from Von Hoffmeier's house."

"What!" cried her *fiancé*, jumping to his feet and seizing her by the arms so that he could look into her face. "There was trouble—a burglary—out there to-night. I received the police-report just before you 'phoned."

Then as a half-realization of what she had to tell flashed into his mind, his face grew white.

"Doris," he cried, "you didn't have that done! You weren't out there, were you?"

"Yes, I was," she answered. "Not only was I out there, but I was in the room when the safe was blown open and Captain von Hoffmeier came in and dragged off my cap and wig, and my safe-breaker knocked him insensible, and then we took what we wanted and came here, so that I could get some clothes before going home."

"Doris, Doris," Melchoir cried, reproachfully, "do you realize what you have done?"

"I do, but you don't—not yet. Do you see those records?" She pointed to the pile on the table and to the Hungarian-dance record on the machine. "They came from Captain von Hoffmeier's study."

Melchoir looked at them. "What of that?" he asked then. "You know I have——"

"I know you played them; and I know, too, that you didn't play them properly. Listen!" The girl motioned to Blackie to start the motor.

At the first words spoken in German, Melchoir sprang to his feet in utter amazement.

"The Ambassador's voice," he cried—then stopped, unwilling to miss one word.

As sentence followed sentence, each conclusively damning, his fingers clenched until the nails bit into the flesh.

"Plans for destroying munition-works, plans for destroying railway-terminals, plans for destroying the Canal!" he ejaculated. "And direct from the German Embassy! At last we have the proof!"

His forehead wrinkled in perplexity.

"I played this very record before Von Hoffmeier even received it, and found nothing like this. How did they do it?"

Blackie showed Melchoir the sound-box and the needle taken from the Captain's study," and explained.

"Now," exclaimed the half-delirious Doris, "what do you think of your Doris and her safe-breaker?"

"I think you both deserve the gratitude of the nation," the Secret Service agent said, solemnly. "You've saved us from the enemy."

Doris hid her face against his breast.

"This is the happiest moment of my life," she murmured. "And I can't keep awake another second. Bob, dear, won't you take me home?"

Reminiscences of a Sporting Photographer.

By

MAJOR ADOLPHE ABRAHAMS, M.D.

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Illustrated from Photographs by the Author.

IF the cynical philosopher was right when he described life as a *mauvais quart d'heure* composed of exquisite moments, I shall have to live for a very long time to accomplish the whole of my fifteen minutes, at any rate if I limit my experiences to the world of sport. For, casting my mind back over years unique in sport and comprising what may fairly be described as exceptional opportunities, I recollect but three outstanding "moments" of real thrill, excitement, or whatever one may include in the term "exquisite."

The first was in 1904; the occasion the Inter-'Varsity Sports. The chief event of the meeting was the half-mile race in which Gregson, the Cambridge President, encountered the Oxford President, Cornwallis. We regarded the former as invincible, and when, three hundred yards from home, he made his effort, the expected appeared inevitable. But immediately the tall Oxonian followed with an irresistible spurt. I was overwhelmed by a feeling of excitement which I have never again experienced, tame though the bare recital of this event must appear. Cornwallis won, but in what a time! 1.54⅘, a record in these sports which may well stand for ever.

Life was very full that day, for even before breakfast another "thrill" had already been provided for me. The year 1904 was unique in the history of the Boat Race in that it was rowed at 8 a.m. At that hour Hammersmith Bridge on a sharp misty morning gave a possible sight of perhaps one hundred and fifty yards in either direction. When the boats came into sight the picture they presented was extraordinarily attractive. Out of the fog they appeared and for a few seconds they hung fairy-like in perspective close together in mid-stream, to vanish out of sight in a couple of dozen strokes. "Pretty race," cooed the professional watermen around me, and indeed it has very rarely happened that the spectacle has been presented of the rival Blues straining neck and neck at this point Almost invariably at least a length and a half separates them, and this means some forty yards, with the appearance even at this stage of a procession.

My third "thrill" was at the Amateur Athletic Championships in 1913, and related to the Long Jump. My brother was competing for the last time in his long career. On many occasions he had just failed to be champion, for whether he jumped superbly well or deplorably badly he always just missed ultimate success. I was watching the jump through field-glasses from the opposite side of the ground. When my brother was about to take his last jump he was at this stage led by a Swedish opponent. I realized poignantly that he was about to make his very last jump in competition in his life. I have a sneaking attraction towards some form of thought transference or influence at a distance unexplainable on ordinary physical lines, and I concentrated all my soul into a fervid hope that he should win. At that moment my brother jumped; there was a roar from the crowd in the vicinity of the pit—and S. S. Abrahams was Long Jump Champion for 1913 (1).

Now I ought at once to explain that there is a very good and valid reason why I have had so few excitements. I am essentially a photographer of these incidents and, paradoxically, witness them without seeing them. But when Cornwallis beat Gregson, for the first and only time in a long photographic experience I was too excited to use my camera; in the Boat Race of 1904 the light was too feeble for me to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity; whilst as regards the Long Jump of 1913 I was about a hundred yards off and so quite out of photographic range.

I have been *present* then at innumerable great events in sport and been privileged to *witness* many Inter-'Varsity, British, and World's records. Yet most of these historical

1.—S. S. ABRAHAMS, LONG JUMP CHAMPION FOR 1913. THE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS HOW THE TAKING-OFF LEG IS ALLOWED TO HANG AS THE JUMPER RISES. IT SHOULD NOT REACH THE LEVEL OF THE OTHER LEG UNTIL THE JUMPER IS AT HIS MAXIMUM HEIGHT IN MID-AIR.

occurrences I have never actually *seen*. I have sacrificed the interest to the necessity of concentrating attention upon my apparatus in the desire to obtain a permanent record.

Yet on the whole I feel I have gained more than I have missed. We are fond of assuring each other nowadays that things can never be the same again. We may live to witness a condition of affairs in which our life of four years ago seems to have been not merely a different existence, but an existence in another world. We may know a generation who will read of the Boat Race and the other doings of our mighty contemporaries as we read of mail-clad knights, of jousting and of archery. And to them I may show my pictures and tell of the deeds of those who fought and fell for the salvation of the Empire, deeds in a more peaceful activity, deeds which will probably never be equalled, almost certainly never surpassed.

Posterity will revel in our stories of the Boat Race, and I regret that I have never seen a photograph which can convey an adequate impression of the great Water Derby. One wants a picture which will graphically illustrate Mr. R. C. Lehmann's picturesque description :—

"And it's all a blur of shouting and of steamers blowing steam,
And of launches close behind us that are churning up the stream.
And it's Hammersmith and Chiswick and the noise of many men
While they spurt and we keep spurting as the coxes call for ten!"

Although Mr. Lehmann has been kind enough to assure me that one of my photographs came up to his standard, I must candidly admit that it never approached mine.

I have always photographed at Hammersmith Bridge, for notwithstanding the general rule that a substantial interval separates the boats at this position, there is always a possibility that it is the stage when the race becomes most critical. In 1912 it will be recalled that both crews sank, Cambridge off Harrods', Oxford shortly after passing Hammersmith. My photograph that year was taken a few seconds before the Dark Blues became water-logged (2). It amuses me to announce that although the fact is evident from the reversal of the seating in the boat, nobody has ever observed that my photograph must have been taken through the glass of the plate! For the first time I publish this admission of my clumsiness, not infrequent in the novice, quite unpardonable in the experienced.

Through desiring to photograph various stages of the event, I missed the finer details of what was perhaps the greatest race ever run, the eight hundred metres at Stockholm in 1912. Hanns Braun, a young Bavarian who had been three times British Half-Mile Amateur Champion, was in competition with six Americans and a Canadian. I believe Braun to have been the greatest runner the world has ever seen at this distance (3).

One living Englishman and one alone has the privilege of being an individual winner on the track at the last Olympic Games. Of course, we won one other event, a relay race, but it will be almost unnecessary to state that the only Englishman to win a gold medal in an individual

2.—OXFORD, NEARLY UNDER WATER, A FEW SECONDS BEFORE SINKING IN THE 1912 RACE.

3.—THE 800 METRES RACE AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES, 1912. H. BRAUN, THE THIRD ON THE INSIDE, IS, IN THE AUTHOR'S OPINION, THE GREATEST RUNNER THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN AT THIS DISTANCE.

effort was A. N. S. Jackson, whom I recently met with a second bar to his D.S.O. and commanding his battalion.

Although Jackson beat all the best milers in the world, I do not hesitate to class him as a good but not a great performer at this distance. It is generally forgotten that fifteen hundred metres is one hundred and twenty yards less than a mile, and this shorter distance suited Colonel Jackson rather better than most people realized. He is the type which could always have had the one thousand yards and the three-quarter mile World's records at his mercy. I remember well that in forecasting the result of the Olympic race I placed Jackson as a probable fourth. I could not see a comparative novice beating John Paul Jones, the greatest amateur miler at that time; Tabor, who subsequently in America beat W. G. George's mile record by a tiny fraction of a second, and Abel Kiviat, the World's record holder at fifteen hundred metres, not to mention Wide, Sweden's great runner. At the end of the first lap Jackson was a good dozen yards behind the leader, at the bell (four hundred yards from the tape) he lay sixth, still eight yards in the rear. With three hundred yards to go he suddenly rushed to the front and kept his form with marvellous determination to the end. I believe that the Americans underrated the opposition and watched each other so closely that they paid no attention to their outside opponents. But none of them grudged the Englishman his splendid victory, and their enthusiastic congratulations were all in keeping with the sportsmanship I have always experienced in them (4).

If we snatched an unexpected victory at Stockholm in Colonel Jackson's event we certainly lost one which we deserved to win in the Hurdles. The late Lieutenant G. R. L. Anderson had studied and developed a style which amazed even the American coaches who thought they had nothing to learn in this event (5). But in the semi-final Anderson fell when leading; in all probability his discomfiture was attributable to the race being run on cinders instead of grass, to which English hurdlers are accustomed. The additional pace the track afforded may well have upset the delicate co-ordination which a first-class hurdler must possess. I believe Anderson would have beaten a World's record

4.—A. N. S. JACKSON, THE ONLY LIVING ENGLISHMAN TO WIN A GOLD MEDAL IN AN INDIVIDUAL EFFORT AT THE LAST OLYMPIC GAMES, WINNING THE 1,500 METRES RACE AT STOCKHOLM IN 1912.

in the hurdles, to my mind the most wonderful record it is possible to achieve—running one hundred and twenty yards and clearing ten obstacles all inside fifteen seconds!

5.—THE LATE LIEUT. G. R. L. ANDERSON (THE FAMOUS HURDLER) HAD STUDIED AND DEVELOPED A STYLE WHICH AMAZED EVEN THE AMERICAN COACHES, WHO THOUGHT THEY HAD NOTHING TO LEARN.

Another Stockholm snapshot shows the leap of 6ft. 3in. made in the High Jump by G. Horine, of the United States (6). Horine had previously beaten the World's record in America with the phenomenal leap of 6ft. 8in.

One cannot but speculate what the Games of 1916 at Berlin might have given us. The marvellous results of 1912 prepared us to expect anything. We saw World's records broken with almost monotonous regularity, but more than that, we saw the entry into the field of nations whom we had hitherto supposed to possess no athletic ability whatever. Would the limits of human endurance and achievement have been still further extended? Would other nations have sprung into prominence out of obscurity as Finland sprang in 1912? That Germany, as promoting nation, would have made a mighty effort is certain. By 1914 we were aware that their preparations were on a mammoth scale and that nothing had been overlooked or neglected in their scheme of training. Crack English professional oarsmen and American trainers had been engaged and were already at work, whilst a systematic investigation of the whole country for talent was instituted. Nevertheless I cannot bring myself to think that the supremacy of American track athletics or of British oarsmanship would have been disturbed.

In an endeavour to contrast the prowess of modern athletic giants with those of a generation or so ago, one realizes with considerable interest the very large number of records which have been established during the last few years.

In University athletics, with the solitary exception of the High Jump record established by M. J. Brooks in 1876 (and very nearly broken by the late G. Howard Smith in 1902), every record has been beaten since 1902. Going farther afield, with the exception of sundry very long-distance events in which the modern athlete had not the time or disposition to specialize, every best on record has been equalled or surpassed since 1903. W. G. George's mile, established in 1886, was the last to go (in 1915), although in justice to the late record-holder he beat his own best time by three seconds during practice. Old-time followers of form tell us that no modern sprinter ever came up to Harry Hutchens, whose perform-

6.—G. HORINE, OF U.S.A., CLEARING 6FT. 3IN. AT STOCKHOLM IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF 1912. HORINE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEATEN THE WORLD'S RECORD IN AMERICA WITH THE PHENOMENAL LEAP OF 6FT. 8IN.

7.—REGGIE WALKER (CONSIDERED BY THE AUTHOR, WHEN AT HIS BEST, TO BE THE FASTEST OF ALL SPRINTERS) AT FULL SPEED IN THE A.A.A. 100 YARDS CHAMPIONSHIP.

ances date back to 1884, although many good authorities enthusiastically acclaim the sprinting of Applegarth in 1913 and 1914 as the finest the world has ever witnessed. It is by no means improbable that J. Donaldson in 1913 was even a trifle better, whilst in my own opinion Reggie Walker, who won the sprint at the Olympic Games in 1908, was when at his best the fastest of all (7).

To me it has always been of enthralling interest to observe how Nature with her own views about aristocracy disperses the super-dreadnoughts of athletics all over the world. Think how two long-distance cracks strikingly similar in build, style, and capacity, like Hannes Kolehmainen and Alfred Shrubb, were produced, the one in a Sussex hamlet, the other in a remote village in Finland. And Nature, whilst generously bestowing upon our little island such gifts as Colonel Jackson, the late Captain Halswelle, the late Lieutenant G. R. L. Anderson, J. Donaldson, C. B. Fry, W. G. George, Applegarth, and others too numerous to mention, established Braun in Germany, Bouin in France, and, not to continue the subject to the point of weariness, produced phenomenal athletes unsurpassed in their own particular events in every State of America, in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Sweden, Finland, Greece, and Hawaii. What should we have seen in the Games of 1916 if Japan, Russia, and perhaps even China, with all those millions from whom to select, had chosen to take a hand in the game?

Even the Channel swim has been accomplished within the last few years, although the repeated failures of numerous aspirants at one time made us despair of ever seeing Captain Webb's great feat repeated. I have always deplored that Fortune deprived me of witnessing what would have been a wonderful record in 1908, when Jabez Wolffe very nearly succeeded in reaching Calais on the one occasion when I accompanied him. But for an error of judgment by the pilot who directed his course, an error which caused him to miss the tide, he would not only have reached French soil but have accomplished the distance in about two-thirds the time taken by Webb in 1875 (8).

I have frequently been asked what is the most difficult sporting event to photograph. I will bracket as equal the successful attempt to show an amateur dislodging a tent-peg and a man being bowled at cricket. I say amateur advisedly, because a crack professional soldier can perform the first feat with almost infallible accuracy, and the shutter can be released with the certainty of obtaining a good photograph. The amateur may or may not hit the peg squarely, and so one must not make the exposure until the peg is actually seen on the lance, and this leaves precious little time for decision (9). The cricket photograph exhibits much the same sort of difficulty. Unless you adopt the impracticable procedure of photographing every ball sent down, you cannot anticipate the fall of a wicket with

8.—JABEZ WOLFFE ON HIS EIGHTH ATTEMPT TO SWIM THE CHANNEL, WHEN, BUT FOR AN ERROR OF JUDGMENT BY THE PILOT, HE WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ABOUT TWO-THIRDS THE TIME TAKEN BY CAPTAIN WEBB.

any individual ball. I had the remarkably good fortune of securing in two consecutive exposures two almost identical pictures of falling wickets, a piece of luck I should not expect to encounter twice in a dozen lifetimes (10).

In cricket there is an additional difficulty. No position close to the wicket can be regarded as affording reasonable safety, and the anxiety of avoiding damage to yourself and *a fortiori* to your valued apparatus does not encourage the *sang-froid* essential to perfect high-speed photography.

9.—DISLODGING A TENT-PEG—A SUBJECT WHICH, COUPLED WITH THE CRICKET SNAPSHOT SHOWN BELOW, IS THE MOST DIFFICULT SPORTING EVENT TO PHOTOGRAPH.

There is, however, another way to photograph at cricket, and that is to employ the wonderful tele-photo high-speed camera invented about eight years ago. This apparatus enables you to stand eighty yards off, or even farther, take your observation through a little prismatic telescope on the camera, and thus in perfect comfort and safety obtain pictures perhaps from the top of a pavilion. These "bird's-eye views" have a peculiar foreshortened appearance, but their photography possesses all the fascination of big-game shooting—indeed, the method has been applied to the photography of wild animals in Nature—with none of the dangers.

As I write, I pick up one after the other a number of pictures not one of which fails to include a giant of the past whose last race was run for England and the preservation of all that England holds dear. Kenneth Powell, equally good at lawn tennis and hurdling, winning the 'Varsity Hurdles in record time; Kenneth Powell, who hated war more than anybody I ever knew, but who was one of the first to volunteer as a "Tommy." G. R. L. Anderson, a great scholar and a marvellous athlete. Those two superb athletes from the Antipodes — F. S. Kelly, the greatest amateur sculler of all time, and Anthony Wilding, equally distinguished in lawn tennis. R. F. C. Yorke, perhaps the finest all-round runner who never won a championship. G. W. Hutson, the soldier, the third best distance runner in the world when still a youngster and capable of the greatest promise. The start for the Mile Race, Oxford *versus* Cambridge in 1905, when the Oxonian, the late Captain Henderson Hamilton, beat the Cantab, the late Lieutenant A. R. Welsh, in record time. The photograph fascinates me to recall the obvious boyish confidence of the winner as, trained for the race of his life, defeat seemed to him impossible even before the pistol cracked; and the highly intellectual, pale, determined features of the Cantab, though equally well trained, seeming to foreshadow inevitable defeat and the future tragedy. Photographs of football matches and of 'Varsity eights—man after man has gone, too numerous to mention, to swell the list of those who would form indeed mighty teams or crews to do battle in Valhalla.

10.—CLEAN-BOWLED! TO SECURE SUCH A PICTURE THE PHOTOGRAPHER MUST DEVELOP SUCH RAPIDITY OF ACTION THAT HE MAKES THE EXPOSURE AFTER THE BALL HAS STRUCK THE WICKET AND IS STILL IN TIME TO SHOW THE FLYING BALL, WICKET, AND BAILS.

A Feast of Epicurus

Illustrated by Stanley Davis

by May Edginton

THE man was disgorged with others from the lift at Piccadilly Tube Station, and stood leisurely on the threshold of the Haymarket. He was slightly inclined to corpulence, but brawny as well; not very tall, but tall enough to rise above mere shortness; whatever expression usually lay on his face was swamped by an irresponsible, pervasive happiness seemingly irrelevant to time and place. The face itself was squarish, longish, heavy, and red; the face of a man of strength. The eyes were small and of a fiery blue, eyes of a man who loved living. It was not remarkably early to be in evening-dress; about a quarter to six. He might have been on his way to dine early with a subsequent theatre-party. He stood to light a cigarette, which he fitted carefully into a gold-and-amber holder, and he surveyed the nearest placard good-humouredly.

ESCAPE OF NOTORIOUS CRIMINAL.

DAN ROGERS AT LARGE.

FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD OFFERED.

The newsboy nearest him, seeing his attention caught, thrust a paper on him. He gave the boy sixpence, not waiting for the change, and stepped on to the pavement. His dress overcoat and his opera hat sat faultlessly upon him. He glanced from his little fiery eyes curiously at the passing crowds about him, and for a moment his glance was caught and held.

A police-constable was looking at him keenly.

He crossed the street leisurely, passing close to the constable, standing beside him a moment while a line of taxi-cabs streamed past; thus standing by, he nodded a good evening.

The policeman looked after him, then crossed to the telephone-boxes in the Tube Station.

The man went on down the Haymarket. As he walked he scanned the face of every woman who passed—not with an obtrusive scrutiny, but with a lightning blue stare that took her in from top to toe and switched away again almost before she felt it. So he reached, *viâ* Charing Cross, the hustling Strand, where the business girls came by in succession like a regiment, all homing.

Turning down from Agar Street he saw her; a girl about as tall as himself, not very slim but slim enough, with a short, pale face with anæmic lips, with great big eyes of pale brown, and the most gorgeous red hair under her battered but beautifully-perched black hat. Her suit was battered too. She carried a cheap despatch case, and hurried like the rest. She was London business-girl at her best, in flower. When he saw her he was suddenly still for a second, his fiery eyes focused, like a hound fastening unerringly upon quarry. In two seconds he was beside her, raising his hat.

She walked on a little quicker, frozen. He walked with her.

"Please!" he uttered, hurriedly.

The girl cast him a look then. "No!" she said. There was much virtue in her "No," but there was something else. There was a vexed regret.

For he did not look to be a promiscuous man, and the girl who fends for herself is a judge of that. Moreover, his clothes were so good, his air of leisure and ease so comfortable, so promising——

He slackened his pace, and some influence or force which spoke from him without articulation made her slacken hers too. "Please!" he said again; "it won't hurt you to listen for five minutes, will it? I shall not say anything that you won't like to hear."

His voice was a little hoarse, wearier than his face. She found herself noting details; and while she noted, he took her very gently by the elbow and led her back to the quieter ways leading through Pall Mall. By the time she realized it he was talking again.

"I want to ask you, please, to have dinner with me——"

"Oh! I don't do that sort of thing!"

"—— and go to a theatre after——"

"Oh! I really couldn't!"

"—— if you don't I'll have to find some other girl to be kind enough to give me her company, and I don't want to look farther than *you*."

"I don't know why you should think——"

"I don't think. I only hope. I know what you are—a very respectable young lady. But you are a very, very charming one. All day I've

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"IN TWO SECONDS HE WAS BESIDE HER, RAISING HIS HAT."

been about London and you are the most charming girl I've seen."

The girl's anæmic cheeks did not change colour. She had lost any tendency to blush. But she kept that air of outrage.

He looked at his watch.

"There isn't much time to decide," he said, thoughtfully.

They were standing in Trafalgar Square by now, facing the pile of the National Gallery.

"I can't go out to dinner," she said. "I'm engaged."

His face fell, and she saw what he thought.

"I mean engaged to be married," she added, hastily.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, and for the first time she saw his smile. It was the jolliest smile she had ever seen, and it thawed her.

"It wouldn't do," she said, more confidentially.

"On the contrary, it might do very well indeed," he replied. "Is this young chap of yours rich?"

"Rich! Of course not! No such luck!" she sighed.

"Well, I am rich enough," said the man, quietly, "and I will promise you something to your mutual advantage if you'll just give me your company at dinner to-night."

"It's so strange——"

"It's the most simple, human thing if you only knew——"

"I've never——"

"Had a little harmless adventure? Poor girl!"

"Oh, I'll come!" said she, suddenly.

He had signalled a taxi before she realized it, and they were inside. She put her back into a corner, and sat almost facing him, with space between them.

"You needn't do that," he said, knitting his brows.

"Well, one never knows——"

He made an almost savage plea which startled her.

"Look here! Trust me. I'd love it."

"You're a funny man."

But she sat a bit nearer and he saw her cheek curve into an answering laugh.

After all, she was a rogue like all girls.

"But—but you're in evening clothes!"

"You soon will be, too."

"I—I haven't got——"

He interrupted her: "Don't ask questions. Just let me arrange, will you? I promise you it's all right. You shall hear everything at dinner. But now there isn't time."

The taxi drew up in Hanover Square.

"Where are we going?" said the girl, hostilely.

"To buy clothes," he answered, gripping her elbow, and she was in a lift with him, ascending to the second floor.

"What's your name?" he whispered.

"It doesn't matter."

"I only want your first name. That'll do for the evening."

"Mary."

A softness ran over his face. "That's just right," he whispered. "You won't find a man who doesn't love the name 'Mary.'"

They stepped out.

"You're sure you're going to explain?" she said, salving her conscience by a puerile return to caution and frigidity.

"I swear it."

She was by this time in an apartment of quiet tones and great richness. A model gown or two hung about. Someone was folding up impalpable things. The customers were late.

"This lady," said the man to the saleswoman, "wants to be fitted out for the evening as quickly as possible." To the girl he added, intimately, "Spend up to thirty pounds, Mary."

He then went and sat down on a lounge, while the women disappeared within a fitting-room. From time to time the saleswoman came out and went back again with mysteries hung over her arm. When she did this he bent forward and stared ardently at the burdens she was carrying. They were beautiful—these things which clothed women! Also women were expensive, deliciously expensive! He sat there replete with his satisfaction. Now and again he dropped a hand to feel the softness of the lounge on which he rested. And while he waited, seeing a telephone, he got up, and booked a table at the Carlton.

"A table for two."

The girl came out, followed by the saleswoman, smiling. The girl was staggered, astonished at herself. The blush that few situations could raise on her pale cheek had come by contemplation of her new beauty. She knew herself, for an evening, supreme. Even her anæmic mouth was softly rosy. Her eyes stared unwinking like stars, and golden shoots had come into them. With her hat off one saw the utter gorgeousness of her red hair, sleek wave upon wave.

The saleswoman had dressed her in oyster-white with a flaming blue cloak and finished her down to her handkerchief and her small shoes.

The man rose and, trembling and fumbling very slightly, paid the account. The girl had no more hesitation about going out to dinner.

They ran down to the waiting cab.

It was an autumn night, dusky and warm. Town had thrown off her toil and was making ready for play. Thousands and thousands and thousands of people would soon be engaged in thousands and thousands and thousands of happy ways. Delights were in the air. Mary was not sitting with her back in a corner like a hostile animal withdrawn against a wall to fight.

"Do you mind if I hold your hand?" came the husky voice near her.

"Well, only my hand, mind you!"

"I won't if you don't like it. You are being kind; very kind."

But after a few moments she dropped her hand carelessly to the seat beside her. Then he took and held it in one sinewy and hard.

"You play games?" she asked, feeling his hand with a cuddling movement of her softer one.

"Many sorts."

They were at the Carlton. For the first time that evening she heard his name, when he gave it to the official who was allotting tables.

"I rang up a while ago—table for two—Mr. James Oatley."

They were piloted to their table. The girl had refused to leave her blue cloak in the dressing-room; she wanted to wear all—all! She could feel it satiny against the unaccustomed bareness of her shoulders. Now Oatley helped her off with it, and hung it very reverently over her chair, where it made a perfect background for her, as she knew.

She had never been in any such restaurant before, but woman-like she didn't reveal this. She looked around her unafraid while Oatley looked at her. She knew, of course, that the first thing he'd do when she had her cloak off would be to look at her. She had summed him up with her London shrewdness as reliable; and manageable. But of course he was a man.

So she gave him his opportunity to stare unreproved.

"I ought to have told you my name at once," he said, when the soup had been removed, and champagne foamed in their glasses. "You heard it just now? James Oatley. I'm from New York. This is my first visit to this country. I don't suppose you've ever heard of me. But if you came over there——" his modest but jolly smile said, "you would."

"Are you a millionaire?"

He stroked his chin, which was very long and had had a remarkably clean shave. His hair was cropped so close that he had a bullet-headed look. "Not quite," he answered, "not quite. But why?"

"Because of what you said——"

"Oh! Oh-h-h! I haven't forgotten. That's all right. I'm to hear about you. You're engaged?"

"I've been engaged for two years."

"Why! How old are you?"

"I'm twenty."

"Twenty!" he said. He laughed. "God! Fancy being twenty!" He mused. "Twenty!"

She rejoined: "I don't suppose *you* were working at twenty? *You* were rich. *Were* you rich at twenty? What *were* you doing?"

Over his face there swept a remarkable look which made her catch her breath. There was pain in it, acute.

"What wasn't I doing? Planning to buy the world one day, and the next swearing money was dirty stuff—no good to anybody. That's how we are at twenty, like the wind. North, south, east, and west. How old do you suppose I am, now?"

She guessed:—

"Forty-five."

It was nearly right.

"Forty-one," he said. "So I look a good forty-five, do I?" He mused, and for a sudden moment in thought he travelled far from her; his brow wrinkled painfully; and he sighed.

While his attention wandered into some dim recessful place, again she looked round the restaurant to see who was looking at her. And a man was looking—one of two who had come in since her entry with Oatley, and had been given, after a brief word with the official who allotted tables, a place rather near them. His companion was glancing at James Oatley.

They were both tallish, nondescript, yet smart, she decided, for she judged men mostly by their clothes and the places at which they ate. They were men cut to a pattern, laconic, trim, one blond, the other darker.

It was the darker one whose gaze, part meditative, part admiring, she had intercepted on its straight passage across intervening tables to her face. She looked away and unconsciously preened herself, her eyes brighter, the blood flowing redder in her cheek.

Oatley was back again, his fiery blue gaze returning to her with all its former concentration, and he had caught the look she had snatched away from the two diners at the near-by table. He turned his eyes quickly in its direction.

He screwed a monocle into his eye, and gazed urbanely. The thought that he was distinguished grew with her. Only rich men troubled about monocles.

"Anyone you know?" he questioned, pleasantly.

"No." She thought: "As if anyone I knew would be dining here!" but was pleased at the impeachment.

"Why!" said he, "why! If it isn't—— Old acquaintances from little old New York. Excuse me one moment, Mary."

He rose leisurely, dropping his napkin carefully on his chair. He paused to speak a word to his waiter who was approaching for service. He nodded across to the two men, who nodded back. Then he bent slightly with one more apology to Mary, and threaded his way to their table.

"Why" he said, "Brunton! Grays! If I am to call you so at the moment——?"

His eyebrows went up whimsically; he had his hand on the blond man's shoulder. The other rested on the table, and the dark man looked down at it swiftly for an impalpable second. It was a thick hard hand, but bore signs of good enough keeping, with carefully-trimmed nails.

"Oh, *you* may," said the blond man.

Oatley drew up a chair and sat down. "Well, one never knows if you fellows are on a stunt. Perhaps it's just a pleasure trip this evening, eh, Brunton?"

The dark man smiled easily. "Perhaps it is."

"Queer I should see you here to-night," said Oatley. "I only landed to-day, from the *Marcus*. I came over rather on the quiet for business reasons. However, never mind those. When I said it was queer meeting you just to-night I meant because of—have you seen this evening's papers?"

"Yes," said Grays.

Oatley exclaimed: "Then you've seen my double is flitting about somewhere again."

"Rogers?" said Grays. "Yes. He broke jail three days ago, though it's only just been made public."

"Well," said Oatley, "you both know me. I'm in this city and the rest of your pals at the Yard had better know too, I guess. I sha'n't forget that time in N'York when he posed as James B. Oatley for—how long was it?"

"Le's see," said Brunton.

"Three weeks," Grays replied.

"Three weeks," said Oatley, chuckling and nodding confirmation. "It was you caught him, Grays. I'll always remember you for that, though it's — how long again? — eight years since we met. But I knew you and Brunton directly I saw you. I'd heard you'd left N'York to give a fillip to the police work over here. Well, we could give a good many fillips over here. That's *my* opinion. You fellows given your order?"

The wine waiter was now standing by awaiting a rift in the talk.

"Just giving it," said Brunton.

Oatley cried: "No, you don't. You'll have a bottle with me. What you like. I *must*, that's all about it. I want to treat somebody straight away. Seeing two old N'York faces my first night over, why, it's great! What shall it be?"

"Oh, look here," said Brunton.

"Pommard," said Grays, without a flicker.

"Pommard!" quoth Oatley, with scorn. He took the wine list, ran his eye and finger down and chose a famous vintage. "Waiter, the gentlemen's wine is mine. I'm sitting over there. Well, so long, boys." He rose.

"You see I can't stay," said he, smiling, with the debonair look that only a pretty girl brings to one-and-forty's face.

They smiled too; congratulations. Brunton again flickered a surreptitious look at a white figure of girlish yet gorgeous proportion against a flame of blue.

"Join us at the theatre after," said Oatley, invitingly. "I'd like to introduce you. We've got a box—No. 6—at the Empress."

Grays looked at him straight. "Thanks," he replied, readily.

Brunton observed: "We're expecting a cable, as a matter of fact."

"Then you *are* on a stunt? Now you've let up! But it's all right, boys, it's all right. So you can't come?"

"I think we can," said Grays.

"Yes, we'll come," said Brunton; "like to."

"The cable, if it interests you to know," said Grays, looking Oatley straight and pleasantly in the face, "is about yourself."

"About me! Why, that's great!"

"We cabled over to New York to ask your whereabouts."

"Why—— Eh? Because of that devil Rogers? Ha! ha! ha! This *is* great! I'm tickled to death!"

"We'll get the cable while we're here, probably, won't we, Brunton?" Grays asked.

Brunton nodded non-committally.

"Don't matter much about the cable," said Oatley. "*I'm* here."

"Yes," said Brunton.

"Anyway, get it sent on to the theatre after you," said Oatley. "We'll all read it together. I tell you I'm just tickled to death."

"Might do that," said Grays. "That would do very well. We'll be with you at the theatre. Follow your taxi, shall we?"

They all laughed. Oatley got up and stood, one hand on his hip, the other on the table. His monocle magnified one fiery blue eye. "Well, I must be off! I say, though, what was the devil in for here?"

"Robbed a bank. Got ten years."

"How much had he done?"

"Seven."

"Silly beggar," said Oatley; "better have stayed the course."

"They get craving, you know," said Grays.

Oatley remarked: "I see by this evening's paper that he's supposed to have just burgled a house in Maida Vale or somewhere—where's that?—and lifted a clear sixty pounds cash."

"That won't get him away," said Grays.

"It'll give the beggar a fairish run," said Oatley. "P'r'aps that's all he wants and expects. If he's wise he'll blue it gloriously. Well——" The wine arrived. "Cheero, boys!" said Oatley, and left.

Back at his table he apologized again. "Am I forgiven?"

"Yes," said Mary, pouting.

"I've not been *preux chevalier*; I'm a casual bloke to take out a delightful young lady. But I'll make up. You'd got to tell me all about yourself."

As he spoke he refilled their glasses. First he drank to her. Then, looking across at the two detectives, he raised his glass again and nodded. They responded. Oatley set down his glass empty, and looked into the girl's big pale-brown eyes, now lashed and dark with excitement.

"*All* about yourself," he repeated.

"What a thing to ask!"

"About this engagement of yours, now. What sort of fellow is he?"

She missed the piercing wistfulness of his look while she looked down and played with a fork.

"Oh, he's a dear."

"What's his name?"

"Robert Morton."

"Where's he live?"

She said: "In rooms in Pimlico. Lupus Street."

She looked round the Carlton a little apologetically, adding: "Of course, he's saving. We want to start well."

"What's well?"

"With a little capital. I don't believe in putting your last penny in the furniture." He noted tiny lines, lines of the bargainer, on her London-flower face, and looking from them to her red hair, admired her wholly for the character she had, sharp, naïve, shrewish, and courageous.

"Good!" he said. "You're wise. Drink your champagne."

She drank, and saw him smile as the golden foam touched her now flushed lips.

"What are you smiling at?"

"You, Mary. What does this fellow of yours do?"

"Journalism," she said, grandly.

"What kind?"

When she told him he smiled again at her description. "That tosh!" he said.

"You're not very polite!" she answered.

"How would capital help him?"

"He'd have time to strike out on a different line if he had money behind him." She talked eagerly.

"You love him?" said Oatley.

"Oh, he's not a bad old card as men go."

"You do," said Oatley. She was blushing. "Lucky fellow," he added, thoughtfully. Then he asked: "What's the exact address?"

When she had given it she asked: "Why?"

"I told you," he replied, "I'm going to do something for him."

"Oh! When?"

"At once."

"But why?"

He looked at her and she blushed very prettily.

"Waiter," he said, looking round. The man came. "Bring grapes and peaches—you like them, Mary?—and nuts. And port."

While the service proceeded, he looked at her openly and proudly. "What a companion I've got!" he said, in a voice of real glee.

"May I pay you compliments?" he asked, and he began to tell her beautiful things about herself; about her red hair; and the lovely velvet thickness of the kind of skin which goes with it; about her eyes; her thin white hands. She became more radiant than ever, as he had purposed making her, and many people looked at them. As for Brunton, he could hardly keep his eyes away for two consecutive seconds. Oatley looked around and saw and thrilled.

"This is great!" he said, whisperingly. "Great!"

She murmured decorously: "You've given me a lovely dinner."

"Mary," he replied, "this is a gala night."

She went on: "If Bert could see me——"

"There'll be many things in your life Bert had better not see, if you're wise. You're so pretty! So terribly pretty!"

"You think so? *Really?*"

She spoke breathlessly. He saw a womanly dream of power in her eye.

"Eat a peach," he begged. "Take it in your fingers and bite it, do." But she wouldn't do that. She used a knife and fork correctly.

Oatley sipped his port, while she ate fruit. He met Grays' eyes. He counted the men who were looking at the girl; his girl.

"Glad you don't undervalue money," he said, suddenly.

"Does anyone? Do you?"

"Do I? No, my girl, I don't. I love it. I—*love it.*"

He sipped port. It oiled his tongue richly.

"ABOUT THIS ENGAGEMENT OF YOURS, NOW. WHAT SORT OF A FELLOW IS HE?"

"Do you know," he said, "that it is really the rich man who can enter the kingdom of God; but it's devilish hard for a poor one. There's a man—he's a common criminal—who happens to be exactly my double——"

She exclaimed in horror: "A common criminal!"

"Ah. He's that. He was a man who liked good things; he hadn't got 'em. Now if he had been rich he would have had them. He wouldn't have had to go out looking. And he's got a lust for sport that leads him into queer places. If he was rich it would lead him into Central Africa after big game. As it is . . . Ah, well . . . Ah, well . . . He loves wine and good food, and the freedom of great hotels. He loves a gamble. But all he's got to stake is his liberty, so he stakes it with gusto, by God! But liberty's not a commodity you lay on the tables at Nice and Monte Carlo. That's where he'd be gambling with gold if he was rich, but he isn't rich. When he's staked his shirt and his boots he stakes his body, he stakes his soul; his liberty's all he's got left to play with——"

He heard her little voice saying: "People oughtn't to be dishonest. Where would we all be if——"

Running on: "Now," said he, "if this fellow was rich, if he was James B. Oatley instead of what he is, he'd have been a sport instead of a pariah. Eh? Isn't it all queer—queer?"

He shook his head. Again he was far from her—till her little voice said, poutingly:—

"You oughtn't to be making excuses for such people."

He started. "No," said he, in a jolly voice. "I won't. They get their run and they shall pay their money. Let 'em take their medicine." He looked at a watch on his wrist. "Waiter, quick! Coffee and—what's your liqueur, Mary?"

"Oh! I couldn't!"

"You could, to-night. Have a crême de menthe. Kümmel for me, waiter." He tasted it very, very appreciatively.

He knew that many men envied him when, waving away the waiters' services, he rose to hang Mary's blue cloak upon her cream-coloured shoulders. He bent down to her. "There must be at least fifty fellows here—if I had time to count 'em—who'd give their ears to be in my shoes."

As they walked out the thought walked with him.

"Fifty men—fifty men—are envying me."

He could not refrain, at the door, from looking back at them.

Brunton and Grays had risen too; were sauntering through the maze of tables.

The commissionaire had a taxi up quickly. Oatley put Mary in and with his foot on the step, turned to grin and wave to Brunton and Grays. They nodded. A second empty cab was rolling up as the first got away.

The girl was warm with delight; and friendly. He took her hand again, and glanced from the window. The drive was to be very short.

"Mary," he said, "there isn't a great deal of time. We sha'n't be alone in the theatre, and I may possibly not be able to see you home. Look here——" he suddenly faltered. The girl knew perfectly well what was coming.

"May I kiss you?" he asked.

"You promised——"

"All right. All right, I know I promised. But let me tell you. I was going to persuade any woman who kindly came out to dinner with me to let me kiss her good-night. I knew it'd have to be persuasion because I meant to have a nice woman—a girl I'd be proud to be seen with. A girl who looked like my own. God! didn't those fellows in the restaurant envy me! . . . Do you think you understand?"

"You are an extraordinary man."

"Why?"

"Not to kiss me."

Oatley drew a quick breath and, putting his arm about her, held her to him and kissed her. She was not at all unwilling. She was laughing.

"Ah!" he said, "it's nice to kiss a laughing girl! I love laughter. This is heaven."

And he asked, whisperingly: "Now will you kiss me and say 'good-night?'"

But she would not kiss him.

"Oh, well," he pondered. "It's been good enough—good enough—I'm very grateful." She let him hold her close in his arm till the cab stopped, though. Then, recovering herself, she fairly sailed, with that innocent virgin look which girls can reassume at will, after the attendant who led them to their box. She was seated, programme in hand, chocolates before her, bright with wine and joy, when the door opened again to admit Oatley's two other guests.

Grays and Brunton had not been long behind them. They went through their introductions to the girl with an unction which flattered her. As for Oatley, he made them heartily, hospitably welcome. "I like a party," he said. "It's good to have gathered one together unexpectedly on the—first night over."

The curtain went up on the play.

Oatley went softly to the door of the box, beckoned and whispered one of the programme girls who hung about the corridor. He returned with two more programmes for Grays and Brunton, and sat down at Mary's elbow.

Just at the end of the second act the programme girl to whom he had spoken came quietly to the door of the box, and spoke to him. He heard what she had to say, then whispered it on to Grays. "The business-manager here's an old friend of mine. Jimmy Arden. Say! I'm in luck. And I didn't know till he sent that girl round! He's outside wanting a word—just in the corridor. 'Scuse me a second——"

He gave a light, a fleeting pressure to Mary's bare arm, a little loving nip; and passed out, drawing the door to behind him. The attendant whispered: "That was all right, sir?"

He answered: "All right. Smart girl!" gave her a smile and slipped a coin into her hand. Close by stood a messenger with a sealed envelope in his hand. Oatley looked at the address with the air of one who had the right.

"That the cable Mr. Grays was expecting?" said he, easily. "Mr. Grays is in the bar."

"LIKE TO EARN FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS BY CATCHING A NOTORIOUS CRIMINAL?"

When he had seen the messenger disappear thither he went very quietly but swiftly up the corridor, hustled his things from the lounging cloak-room attendant, darted downstairs, out into the street. By luck he caught a prowling taxi immediately.

"No. 100B, Lupus Street," he said, amiably. "Go like fury."

He leaned back. There was a stale smell of cigarette smoke in the taxi, instead of the scent of that girl. He thought, and began to calculate: "He'll look round the bar for a minute, go back to the box; it must have given enough time for my start. I do wonder how the little girl'll get home. But something and someone always provides for little girls." The cab sought dark cobbled streets near the Embankment, and rattled him along.

It stopped sooner than he expected and wanted it to. He gave the driver, with a jest, a coin; half a crown. It was the last in his pocket. Knocking upon the door of an apartment house he asked for Mr. Morton, thinking:—

"And now suppose the blighter isn't in?"

But he was in.

"My luck's held," said Oatley, climbing stairs. He gave his hat a rake. "Good gambler's luck."

A knock on the indicated door brought a young man to it at once.

"Mr. Robert Morton?" Oatley asked.

"Yes," said the young man. "What do you

want ? " And then seeing the caller's prosperous appearance, he added : " Come in."

So Oatley went into the dingy room, very frowsy and very littered, and stood.

He refused a chair.

" It won't take long to state my business. I've come to do you good."

" Aren't mad, are you ? " said the young man, laughing at his own wit.

Oatley saw an under-sized fellow with a mean face ; of great respectability, yet virtuously raffish ; weak but violent, with a dignity that was incarnate temptation to more ribald spirit. An impulse seized Oatley. . . . But no.

He bit at a finger-nail half savagely ; then stopped, tickled at the smoothness of the finger tip. For two nights he had slept in cold-creamed kid gloves like a vain woman.

" You seem interested in me," said Mr. Morton, his cigarette drooping from his lip.

" I am," said Oatley. " I was wondering what a woman really likes in a man. However, I suppose a woman knows."

" Often have to take what they can get nowadays," said Mr. Morton.

Oatley rejoined : " So it seems. . . . Well, now my explanation. I propose to give exactly three minutes to it. If I'm longer all my benevolent plans for you may miscarry. You're engaged to a nice girl. A very nice girl. She did me a kindness this evening."

He rejoiced in the jealousy on the fellow's face. " Did me a great kindness," he repeated. " Now I'm going to repay her by doing you one. See this ? " From his overcoat pocket he brought out and unfolded his evening paper, and pointed to a headline. " Like to earn five hundred pounds by catching a notorious criminal ? "

Morton stared at him like a wise owl without comment.

" I'm him," said the other, in his slightly hoarse voice. " I broke jail three days ago. I got some cash, and I've had my fling. It's over. I haven't an earthly of getting away. Two of the smartest men in Scotland Yard'll have me before morning anyway. But I don't like going cheap. I rather fancy this price. And if you like to find me——"

Morton had his narrow back against the door already.

" No, you infernal little amateur policeman," said the other, with extreme yet quiet ferocity, " not that way. I'd have you away from that door and dead as that door with a turn of my hand if I liked. Besides, you've got to do it plausibly. And you'll do it as like a sport as you can. That is to say, you'll do it as *I* say. In ten minutes from now I shall be standing on Vauxhall Bridge. You, with all that wonderful boost and brilliancy which you express in your sweet face, will spot me ; you will follow me. You'll bring off a capture and a newspaper story. Stand away from that door."

Morton stood away. " And open it for me politely," said the convict.

In a raised staccato voice Morton began : " But—but—but——"

" You'll have to do it as I tell you if you're to clear that five hundred."

" Come ! " Morton gasped. " This is an extraordinary story——"

" It would be," said Rogers, with vanity, " if I had the telling of it. If you want to see whether it's true come to Vauxhall Bridge in ten minutes, and if you want that five hundred spot cash for any sake don't call a constable now."

Flicking a speck of dust from his coat, settling his hat, he turned for the door, but checked.

" Before I go," said he, " for the Lord's sake give me a whisky-and-soda ; I'm cleaned out ; it'll be my last for——"

" I'm a teetotaller," replied Morton.

" Oh, my crimes ! " said the sinner. He cast upon the young man a look of mingled ribaldry and loathing, and walked out, the other hard on his heels.

" You fool ! " said Rogers, turning ; " go back. You'll ruin it all."

So alone he walked out into the velvet night that hid the dolour of Lupus Street.

As he stood on the great bridge he lighted a cigarette, his last and a good one. It was fragrant. Minutes passed. He saw under the lamps, nosing towards him, the young man, light and keen ; eager ferret.

Something made him think of the girl's red hair, and chuckle deeply : " God ! " he said to himself, " I'm glad she's ginger. She'll give him——"

He turned and walked westwards, the pursuit on his heels.

The Dance Girl

by E. R. Punshon

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

THERE was a new dance girl at Hermy Hagen's, and all Dawson City knew it, for the tale spread swiftly through the town how Elsie Gerrard, whom the death of her father, heart-broken by the total failure of his claim, in which he had sunk every cent he possessed and all he could borrow, had left destitute, was now boarding with the Hagens, and would be at the dance-hall every evening when there was dancing.

Some laughed and some sneered, for she had always been quiet and reserved, standing with her father a little aloof from that eager, bustling, passionate community, whose daily business it was to gamble with the wildest forces of Nature in her most stark mood—life against gold.

It was piquant, therefore, to imagine that shy and secret creature, of whom few had had more than a passing glimpse as she helped her father on his claim or came with him at rare intervals into the town for fresh supplies, now plunged into the rough and boisterously free-and-easy life of the dance-hall. But those who laughed and those who sneered, and, too, those who secretly sympathized, were all equally eager to see how the girl faced her new existence, and Hagen's dance-house was never so crowded as during this first week of her engagement.

Mrs. Hagen, watching from her post of vantage between the piano and the big stove, whence she kept strict eye on the proprieties, for she was ambitious that hers should be recognized as the best-conducted and most respectable place of entertainment in the town, beamed with delight as she watched the crowd pouring in. At the moment Elsie was dancing with young Harry Seton, just back from the new goldfield on which he owned the best-paying claim. He was, perhaps, the only man in the room who did not know who Elsie was. It was the frozen misery on her pale young face that had caught his attention, and had made him pick her out when other men hung back, unconsciously awed, perhaps, by the despair that showed in her tragic eyes and was stamped upon her whole expression. And she in her turn was the only person in the room who knew nothing of him or of the success he had recently achieved. Nor, indeed, would she have greatly cared if she had known.

To her he was simply another of the men with whom, by the terms of her contract, she was bound to dance if they chose her for a partner. In his toil-soiled clothes, and with his thick growth of untrimmed beard and whiskers, he looked like any of the rest of them, and she thought him perhaps a little more repulsive than the others because he seemed to her the more obviously excited by drink.

In that she did him some injustice, though it was true that his mood was anything but normal, and true also that he had had at least one drink of Hagen's atrocious and fiery whisky. But his excitement did not come from that. Recently, in three months of mad and passionate toil, he had seen his wildest dreams realized, he had torn from the frozen earth rich treasure she had long kept concealed in her bosom, and now, physically worn out by the strain of labour that had ceased not by day or by night, and mentally exhausted by the feverish excitement of his success, he was in so overwrought a mood it is no wonder the girl thought him drunk, not with gold but with Hagen's whisky.

But by the terms of her engagement she was obliged to dance with him as with any other man who paid down his dollar for the privilege of a few minutes' turn with one of the girls on the dance-house floor; and, indeed, to many a toiler back from the fierce struggle with Nature for the gold she hid so well beneath her shield of frost and sharp biting sword of wind and storm, the hour or two spent in the warm and lighted dance-house seemed often a veritable gleam of paradise.

They were strange enough places, these dance-halls of Dawson City, pure products of time and circumstance unmatched elsewhere, but they were, on the whole, well-conducted; they had a strict if somewhat eclectic code of conduct, and they served a useful purpose in the strange exotic life of those early days on the Klondyke. But Elsie Gerrard at least was in no mood to consider their use and purpose as she whirled mechanically round and round to the strains of the wheezy piano, and knew only that her life was misery and her soul dark despair. Her expression never altered as she danced, and, bending a little forward, Seton said to her:—

"You look in trouble. Is anything the matter?"

She shook her head indifferently, her expression still unchanging, and he said, a little awkwardly:—

"Well, I think there is. I'm sorry."

"Who asked you to be sorry?" she flashed.

with a look of such fierce and passionate intensity that he was fairly taken aback. "Be sorry for yourself," she told him.

"Oh, but I'm not," he answered, laughing a little too loudly.

The music stopped, for Hagen, charging a dollar a dance, saw that none lasted too long. There was a general rush towards the long bar that occupied all one end of the room, but Seton stood still, looking at his partner and still laughing.

She turned away, but he stepped after her, and touched her on the arm.

"Say," he exclaimed, "won't you tell me your trouble? I might be able to help you. I've had luck myself, and I'd like to share it with everyone else."

"I don't want your help," she retorted, quickly and angrily, but then something in the real kindness and goodwill of his voice touched her, and she added, more mildly: "Besides, you can't; no one could. When my father died he owed Mr. Hagen a great deal of money. I had to try to pay it back. And then if I hadn't come here I should have starved, for there was nothing left at all. I was afraid—and the cold, too, the awful, awful cold. So I came to be a dance girl here, as they call us."

"I see," he said, thoughtfully. Her voice had been full of an intense and passionate loathing; and that strange expression of still misery upon her pale young face which had attracted him at first never altered in the least. "I see," he repeated. "Then you don't like this sort of thing?"

"Like it?" she repeated, with a low indrawn breath that spoke her feelings very clearly and plainly. "It will kill me," she said, passionately. "But Mrs. Hagen says it's just the same to dance with people for pay as it is to dance before people for pay for them to look at, as they do in the theatres at home. And I daresay it is."

"Well, look here," he said, "how much is it you owe Hagen? I'll pay it for you, and——" He stopped awkwardly, checked by the passion in her eyes.

"You see," she said, with a little movement of her hands, "every man thinks he has a right to insult me now."

"I didn't mean to insult you," he grumbled.

"But you think I would take your money?" she said, bitterly. "You think you have a right to offer it?"

"Why not?" he asked, very angry himself now at the way in which she had received his well-meant suggestion. "Or, if you won't take my money, take me. Marry me!"

She faced him with flashing eyes and a face from which every vestige of colour had fled.

"Just say that again," she muttered, her voice coming and going unequally; "say that again, and so I will."

"I do say it again," he answered, his anger as high and fierce as hers. "Will you marry me?"

"Yes, I will," she said. "Now, then."

"Right," he said, calmly. "Be ready first thing to-morrow morning. I'll tell Hagen you're not dancing any more, and that I'll hammer the life out of any man who asks you to after this, and I'll pay him what's owing."

Hermy Hagen's protests were vigorous and picturesque, but Seton was in no mood to listen, and he cut the dance-hall keeper's lamentations very sort. He paid what Elsie's father had owed Hagen, and also the amount stipulated for in her contract as the penalty for a breach of it, and then he went off to make arrangements for the morning's ceremony.

On the Klondyke few formalities are necessary, and Seton had no difficulty in arranging for the marriage to take place first thing in the morning, and when the next day he went round for Elsie he found her ready for him, and still of the same mind. But her mood had changed, and from the reckless and passionate despair of the previous night she had sunk into a listless, dull indifference.

"You've still time to change your mind," he told her.

"If I did," she said, apathetically, "I shouldn't be able to pay you back the money you've given Hagen, and I don't like being in debt." She paused, and added in the same dull way: "I'm quite ready to marry you, if you like. I think I would rather marry you than any other man out here."

"Would you?" he exclaimed, with a sudden leaping excitement.

"Yes," she said. "I think I detest you the most of them all. One or two of the others might be tolerable in time, but you—you——" She paused and gasped, as though all at once she had a difficulty in breathing, and then she laughed. "You can't say I didn't warn you," she said.

"I don't understand you," he muttered, greatly dashed; and because he was young and knew very little, it seemed to him strange that he did not understand her, and a noteworthy and puzzling thing.

Within half an hour the ceremony that made them man and wife was over, and after it he took her round to one of the stores and they made a few purchases.

"Now I've good news for you," he said, when this was done. "You know I've sold an interest in my claim on the new field to some people with whom I'm going to work it in partnership? They're also interested in a bunch of claims on the Five Fingers field, and I have a share in those claims too, now. So I'm going up there to have a look at them, and you can stay here till I come back."

"Now I've bad news for you," she said; "I'm going with you."

"You couldn't stand it," he retorted; "I shall be there a month, I expect."

She made no answer, and in the end she had her way, and, since everything was in readiness, very soon they were on the trail. One night they would have to camp out, so Seton took a small tent and some supplies, together with an empty coal-oil tin to act as a stove for warming the tent, since he wished to avoid the extra weight of an ordinary stove. As he knew by experience, a big empty oil-can makes a very

"'SAY,' HE EXCLAIMED, 'WON'T YOU TELL ME YOUR TROUBLE? I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU.'"

good emergency stove, though naturally it burns through after comparatively brief use. Since their sleigh was so lightly loaded, Elsie would be able to ride whenever she wished to, or needed a rest, and by way of precaution Seton bought an extra dog, making his team up to four. He also remembered to take his rifle and to put a packet of cartridges in his pocket, as wolves had been reported in the vicinity in unusual numbers that winter.

"Not that I ever heard of wolves attacking anyone," he remarked; "but it's as well to be on the safe side."

The trail was in first-class condition, the dogs in good heart and ready for work, and they journeyed very swiftly and easily. To Elsie this escape from Dawson City, where she had suffered such things, was a great relief, for she felt she could not have endured it had she been forced to stay there longer. She even had a gleam of kindly feeling towards the man who had at any rate removed her from one bondage, even if only to fix his own fetters upon her.

"I should have gone mad," she thought to herself, "if I had stayed in Dawson City any longer."

There was a bright moon and so they continued travelling for some time after sunset. The night was calm and still, and the cold not very severe, and in other circumstances Elsie would have thoroughly enjoyed the trip. But, as it was, they were both very silent as they progressed farther and farther into the depths of the great wilderness of the north, all around

them tall, gaunt trees and endless untrodden leagues of snow, while above their heads the aurora flamed across the sky, its fires pale and spectral in the bright moonlight.

Almost the only time they spoke was once when a distant cry broke through the intense and wonderful silence of that land where all the multitudinous sounds of Nature are hushed beneath the frost's tremendous weight.

"What is that?" Elsie asked, startled.

"Wolves," he answered; "but don't be scared, they never attack people."

"Don't they?" she said, indifferent again.

He did not speak any more, but often he stole quick glances at her. A tragic misery was still stamped upon her small white face, her eyes were sombre and heavy as before. He wondered a little what it would be like if that expression ever changed, and he asked himself what impulse it had been on his side and on hers that had made them partners for life.

"I suppose," he mused, "she didn't think she cared anything about anything, and I——" He drew a long breath. "I'd give a deal," he thought, "to see her look different."

After a time it seemed to him they had gone far enough, and he said aloud:—

"We'll camp here, shall we?"

It was a convenient place he had chosen, well sheltered by a bluff behind and with a clump of dead trees not very far away to provide firewood. He pitched the tent and set up their make-shift stove, which he started with some dry wood Elsie collected in the neighbourhood.

"I'd better cut down one of those dead trees," he remarked; "there isn't enough lying about here to keep us going more than an hour or two."

He took the axe and went off while Elsie filled the kettle with snow for tea and began to prepare their supper. Soon Seton came back with a goodly supply of dry branches lopped from the tree he had felled. He filled the stove afresh and then went on to build a big camp fire in the open for additional warmth both in the tent and for the benefit of the dogs. He was in the act of cutting one of the big branches he had brought into smaller lengths for the stove when suddenly a long-drawn howl sounded from somewhere close by.

"I say, that brute's near!" he exclaimed.

As he spoke he aimed another blow at the log he was cutting, and the axe blade turned on a knot and gashed his leg to the bone.

He flung away the axe with a loud cry and clapped his hands over the wound, from which the blood had spurted in a stream that dyed crimson the snow near at hand. Elsie ran up quickly, hearing his cry. Fortunately she did not lose her head, and together they soon had the bleeding under control and the wound well bandaged. Then she helped him into the tent and covered him with all the rugs and blankets they had brought with them.

"I'm so awfully sorry," he said, feebly; "can't think how I was so clumsy. There's only one thing to do: you must hitch up again and hurry back to Dawson City as fast as you can and get help."

"I've never driven dogs," she remarked.

"It's dead easy," he told her. "There's nothing to do. They know the trail and they'll stick to it all right once their noses are turned towards home. You'll only need to follow behind."

"That seems easy enough," she said.

Far off a wolf howled and the cry was answered once and once again, the sounds faint but distinct in that clear, thin air.

"The wolves——?" she asked.

"They won't bother you," he said. "They never attack people; they're cowardly brutes, they'd never attack anyone moving on the trail."

Again there sounded that long-drawn, sinister howl, this time a little nearer as it seemed.

"Never?" she asked.

"Never," he repeated. "So long as you keep moving you're safe enough. Still, I'm not sorry I brought my rifle. You might give it me before you start; the cartridges too."

She got the weapon and the cartridges and put them down beside him. He stretched out a weak and shaking hand, for the shock and loss of blood had greatly enfeebled him, in order to pick up the rifle and load it. Suddenly he gave a quick and loud exclamation.

"I've brought the wrong cartridges," he exclaimed; "these are no good, they're for a shot-gun of twice this calibre."

And again the long-drawn, threatening cry of the wolf sounded from out of the depths of the forest, and this time the answering cry seemed to be from somewhere close by. Outside the sleigh dogs were crouching nearer to the big camp fire and plainly showing their uneasiness. Once again the cry sounded, and this time there were more answers than one, and they all seemed to come from very near at hand.

"I wonder if the brutes smell blood," Seton muttered, uneasily. "Anyway, they'll never attack anyone moving along the trail, and I'm safe enough with that fire. Do you think you could cut some more wood, though?"

She shook her head, and when he looked at her in a startled way she said:—

"When you cut yourself you threw the axe away and it fell in the camp-fire and got burnt up."

He did not say anything for a moment, for he knew that this was very like a sentence of death.

"Oh, well," he said, "it can't be helped. You had better get off as quickly as you can. You'll be safe enough as long as you keep moving."

She rose without a word and left the tent. He heard her talking to the dogs as she hitched them to the sleigh, and presently he was able to tell that they were starting. He heard her voice encouraging them, and he thought, drearily, that she might have given him just one word of farewell and friendship before going; for he knew well that his peril was extreme, both from the wolves, who were most likely half mad with

hunger, and who had probably scented the blood from his wound, and also from the cold, since the big camp fire outside would soon die down and there was only enough fuel in the tent to keep the oil-can stove going for a very short time.

"She might have said good-bye," he thought, "however much she hated me," and as the thought crossed his mind the tent flap was drawn aside and she came in.

"Oh, I thought you had gone," he said.

She did not answer, and he said, in a puzzled way :—

"I heard the dogs start; I heard you start them."

"I sent them off by themselves," she said. "You said they would keep to the trail. If they do, when they get to Dawson City someone may see them."

He looked at her for a long time without speaking, not quite understanding, and once again they heard a wolf's long-drawn howl from very near at hand. Elsie shuddered and put a stick of their small stock of wood in the stove. She said :—

"If the dogs do keep to the trail help ought to be here first thing in the morning. There is only the night to get through."

"You oughtn't to have done it," he cried out suddenly, loudly, and a little shrilly.

She did not answer. He said again :—

"Why did you ?"

"Why ?" she repeated with a puzzled look. "Why ? I don't know; I never thought of why."

He lay back, exhausted, and she came across to where he lay and smoothed his rugs and saw that he was comfortable. He noticed with astonishment that the tragic look of her eyes had changed and that her expression of frozen misery had vanished also. Once again the howling of a wolf came from the trees near by. She did not seem to notice it, but he could not help trembling a little, and she said :—

"They won't attack us; they won't dare; you mustn't be afraid."

"I'm scared that they've smelt the blood from where I cut myself," he muttered. "I wish you had gone; you'd be safe enough as long as you kept moving."

She set to work to collect all the wood she could find. But she dared not go far from the tent, for already dark forms were flitting ominously between the tall bare trunks of the trees, and one came right out into the open and stood there for a moment. She threw a burning faggot at it and it yelped and ran away, but she was sure it did not go far. She went back into the tent.

"They are coming nearer all the time," she said. "What is the best way of driving them off ?"

He answered only by a groan, for his helplessness was bitter to him as death. She added the wood she had collected to their stock of fuel, but even so it was small enough, and without the axe she could not get more without going farther from the tent than she dared to do while all those grey, silent forms were clustering so thickly near at hand. When she went back outside half-a-dozen wolves were visible amidst the trees near by. They scattered when they saw her, but they went slowly, and one of them paused to snarl at her over his shoulder.

The cold seemed to be increasing, too. She could not stand there, and yet she knew that if she ceased to show herself, and went within, the wolves would soon be upon them. Their grey forms slinking to and fro were visible on every side, clear in the bright moonlight against the snowy background. Every moment their number seemed to increase; she supposed there must be a score at least, if not more.

She thought swiftly, desperately, wondering how to combat both the cold and the wolves, and an idea came to her. Her gift of dancing that had made Hermy Hagen so insistent on securing her services for his dance-hall might be of value now. For if it were true that wolves were too cowardly to attack anyone in movement along the trail, perhaps other kinds of movement might be equally efficacious in keeping them away. Besides, movement of some sort was becoming necessary, for she could feel the deadly chill of the bitter Arctic cold striking to her heart.

A wolf ran out from the shelter of the trees and stood looking at her. She shouted and waved her arms and it vanished instantly, but she was aware that on every side the pack was drawing closer, and on every side she could see fierce eyes gleaming redly and grey forms slinking to and fro across the snow.

It was as though the forest were alive with them, as though the frozen earth had come suddenly to life with these grey shapes of grisly death. She began to dance, standing there before the tent in the bright moonlight, treading the hard, frozen snow as though it had been the polished boards of some glittering ballroom.

To and fro she moved, and at last warmth began to return to her stiff and half-frozen limbs. She flung off her long fur coat, no longer needing its protection, and danced on, and from within Seton cried out very loudly :—

"My God ! What are you doing ?"

For an awful fear had come upon him that the imminence of so terrible a danger had driven her out of her mind. She answered, pausing for a moment :—

"I must keep myself warm, and perhaps if I keep on moving about the wolves will be too frightened to come any nearer."

She resumed her dance—her dance of terror and of death. To and fro she went, now slow, now fast. From within Seton watched her with wonder and with awe, and with all the bitter torture of his helplessness, and from the shelter of the trees the wolves, crouching in the snow, watched, and were afraid with the fear that wild things feel of the unknown and the strange.

An hour passed and still she danced, backwards and forwards, to and fro, her feet light upon the frozen snow that flew up in little puffs from beneath her tread, the moon serene in the sky above. Now and again a wolf would throw back his head and howl, long and loud, the

"AN HOUR PASSED AND STILL SHE DANCED."

sound echoing weirdly through the immense and awful stillness of those vast solitudes.

Another hour passed and she still danced on. Within the tent the stove was growing cold, for there was no more wood left. Without, some of the wolves had come into the open and sat now in a sort of circle, strange and grisly spectators of that strange wild dance in the moonlight and the snow. They were still afraid, however, and showed as yet no signs of making a rush, though she dared not stop even for a moment. Occasionally one or the other would emit one of their long-drawn howls, and another would answer, and another answer that. Once or twice, too, they broke into a wild and dreadful chorus, all baying together, but she neither hesitated nor faltered, still dancing without pause or rest.

The moon drew slowly on towards her setting. The lights of the aurora grew pale and died away, and now all the wolf pack had come out from the shelter of the trees. In a circle all about her they sat and crouched with foamy jaws and eyes of fire, and watched intently that strange dancing figure which never for one moment paused, and whose staggering, reeling movements might for all they knew conceal some great peril,

but upon whom they were all prepared to launch themselves if, for one instant even, movement ceased.

With faltering limbs and failing mind, dazed and exhausted, still she danced, still her feet moved mechanically on the frozen snow, still every movement preserved its rhythm and its time. She was barely conscious now, but yet the idea persisted that she must dance—dance—dance.

She thought sometimes that she was back in Hermy Hagen's dance-hall, and then it would seem to her that she was a schoolgirl again, once more in the old classroom where she and the other children had practised their first steps. She seemed to see again the smiling old white-haired teacher who used to beam approval on their efforts and clap his hands to give them the right time, only it puzzled her that he had now such bright, fierce eyes like hot coals and little flecks of foam upon his jaws.

Slowly the minutes passed, and the hours, and still that dreadful dance continued and ceased not. The moon sank to the horizon, the stars paled and went out; in the east there showed the first signs of the coming of the tardy sun, and still up and down, to and fro, backwards and forwards, went Elsie, reeling and staggering but still upright, her feet keeping unconscious measure on the hard and frozen ground.

One by one the wolves slunk back to seek other prey, for what they had not dared by night they would not venture by day. In vain Seton called to her. She did not hear, she did not heed. She still danced staggeringly on, for it seemed to her that if she stopped she died and another with her, and when, before the sun was fairly up, help came at last she was still dancing on.

It was a sergeant and a trooper of the North-West Mounted Police who came; for the arrival of the dogs without a driver had been at once reported to them and a patrol had started immediately, since it was not difficult to guess that some accident had happened.

Wonderingly, for indeed never had even that wild north land seen such a sight, they paused for a moment to watch her and to point out to each other the wolf tracks that were plainly to be seen all about and around the tent. Then, coming nearer to the dancing girl, who never heeded them, and was indeed not conscious of their presence, the sergeant threw a blanket round her and lifted her in his arms and carried her into the tent

"Gosh," he said, as he laid her gently down, "if she ain't asleep."

Seton, though in not much better case, for the strain of that awful night had been as severe, though in a different way, for him as for Elsie, was able to describe briefly what had happened. By noon they were both safe in the Dawson City hospital, and there it was they held their honeymoon, there that Seton courted and won the love of the wife who had saved him after so strange a fashion, from there that they issued presently, healed in body, content in mind, one in spirit and affection.

"HE LIFTED HER IN HIS ARMS AND CARRIED HER INTO THE TENT."

Three of Them.

CHATS WITH CHILDREN.

IV.—THE LEATHERSKIN TRIBE.

BY

A. CONAN DOYLE

"DADDY!" said the elder boy. "Have you seen wild Indians?"

"Yes, boy."

"Have you ever scalped one?"

"Good gracious, no."

"Has one ever scalped you?" asked Dimples.

"Silly!" said Laddie. "If Daddy had been scalped he wouldn't have all that hair on his head—unless perhaps it grew again!"

"He has none hair on the very top," said Dimples, hovering over the low chair in which Daddy was sitting.

"They didn't scalp you, did they, Daddy?" asked Laddie, with some anxiety.

"I expect Nature will scalp me some of these days."

Both boys were keenly interested. Nature presented itself as some rival chief.

"When?" asked Dimples, eagerly, with the evident intention of being present.

Daddy passed his fingers ruefully through his thinning locks. "Pretty soon, I expect," said he.

"Oo!" said the three children. Laddie was resentful and defiant, but the two younger ones were obviously delighted.

DIMPLES.

"But I say, Daddy, you said we should have an Indian game after tea. You said it when you wanted us to be so quiet after breakfast. You promised, you know."

It doesn't do to break a promise to children. Daddy rose somewhat wearily from his comfortable chair and put his pipe on the mantelpiece. First he held a conference in secret with Uncle Pat, the most ingenious of playmates. Then he returned to the children. "Collect the tribe," said he. "There is a Council in a quarter of an hour in the big room. Put on your Indian dresses and arm yourselves. The great Chief will be there!"

Sure enough when he entered the big room a quarter of an hour later the tribe of the Leatherskins had assembled. There were four of them, for little rosy Cousin John from next door always came in for an Indian game. They had all Indian dresses with high feathers and wooden clubs or tomahawks. Daddy was in his usual untidy tweeds, but carried a rifle. He was very serious when he entered the room, for one should be very serious in a real good Indian game. Then he raised his rifle slowly over his head in greeting, and the four childish voices rang out in the war-cry. It was a prolonged wolfish howl which Dimples had been known to offer to teach elderly ladies in hotel corridors. "You can't be in our tribe without it, you know. There is none body about. Now just try once if you can do it." At this moment there are half-a-dozen elderly people wandering about England who have been made children once more by Laddie and Dimples.

"Hail to the tribe!" cried Daddy.

"Hail, Chief!" answered the voices.

"Red Buffalo!"

"Here!" cried Laddie.

"Black Bear!"

"Here!" cried Dimples.

"White Butterfly!"

"Go on, you silly squaw!" growled Dimples.

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"Here," said Baby.

"Prairie Wolf!"

"Here," said little four-year-old John.

"The muster is complete. Make a circle round the camp-fire and we shall drink the fire-water of the Palefaces and smoke the pipe of peace."

That was a fearsome joy. The fire-water was ginger-ale drunk out of the bottle, which was gravely passed from hand to hand. At no other time had they ever drunk like that, and it made an occasion of it which was increased by the owlish gravity of Daddy. Then he lit his pipe and it was passed also from one tiny hand to another, Laddie taking a hearty suck at it, which set him coughing, while Baby only touched the end of the amber with her little pink lips. There was dead silence until it had gone round and returned to its owner.

"Warriors of the Leatherskins, why have we come here?" asked Daddy, fingering his rifle.

"Humpty Dumpty," said little John, and the children all began to laugh, but the portentous gravity of Daddy brought them back to the warrior mood.

"The Prairie Wolf has spoken truly," said Daddy. "A wicked Paleface called Humpty Dumpty has taken the prairies which once belonged to the Leatherskins and is now camped upon them and hunting our buffaloes. What shall be his fate? Let each warrior speak in turn."

"Tell him he has jolly well got to clear out," said Laddie.

"That's not Indian talk," cried Dimples, with all his soul in the game. "Kill him, great Chief—him and his squaw, too." The two younger warriors merely laughed and little John repeated "Humpty Dumpty!"

"Quite right! Remember the villain's name!" said Daddy. "Now, then, the whole tribe follows me on the war-trail and we shall teach this Paleface to shoot our buffaloes."

"Look here, we don't want squaws," cried Dimples, as Baby toddled at the rear of the procession. "You stay in the wigwam and cook."

A piteous cry greeted the suggestion.

"The White Butterfly will come with us and bind up the wounds," said Daddy.

"The squaws are jolly good as torturers," remarked Laddie.

"Really, Daddy, this strikes me as a most immoral game," said My Lady, who had been a sympathetic spectator from a corner, doubtful of the ginger-ale, horrified at the pipe, and delighted at the complete absorption of the children.

THREE MEMBERS OF THE LEATHERSKIN TRIBE IN THEIR WAR-PAINT.

"Rather!" said the great Chief, with a sad relapse into the normal. "I suppose that is why they love it so. Now, then, warriors, we go forth on the war-trail. One whoop all together before we start. Capital! Follow me, now, one behind the other. Not a sound! If one gets separated from the others let him give the cry of a night owl and the others will answer with the squeak of the prairie lizard."

"What sort of a squeak, please?"

"Oh, any old squeak will do. You don't walk. Indians trot on the war-path. If you see any man hiding in a bush kill him at once, but don't stop to scalp him——"

"Really, dear!" from the corner.

"The great Queen would rather that you scalp him. Now, then! All ready! Start!"

Away went the line of figures, Daddy stooping with his rifle at the trail, Laddie and Dimples armed with axes and toy pistols, as tense and serious as any Redskins could be. The other two rather more irresponsible but very much absorbed all the same. The little line of absurd figures wound in and out of the furniture, and out on to the lawn, and round the laurel bushes, and into the yard, and back to the clump of trees. There Daddy stopped and held up his hand with a face that froze the children.

"Are all here?" he asked.

"Yes, yes."

"Hush, warriors! No sound. There is an enemy scout in the bushes ahead. Stay with

me, you two. You, Red Buffalo, and you, Black Bear, crawl forward and settle him. See that he makes no sound. What you do must be quick and sudden. When all is clear give the cry of the wood-pigeon, and we will join you."

The two warriors crawled off in most desperate earnest. Daddy leaned on his gun and winked at the Lady, who still hovered fearfully in the background like a dear hen whose chickens were doing wonderful and unaccountable things. The two younger Indians slapped each other and giggled. Presently there came the "coo" of a wood-pigeon from in front. Daddy and the tribe moved forward to where the advance guard were waiting in the bushes.

CANOEING.

"Great Chief, we could find no scout," said Laddie.

"There was none person to kill," added Dimples.

The Chief was not surprised, since the scout had been entirely of his own invention. It would not do to admit it, however.

"Have you found his trail?" he asked.

"No, Chief."

"Let me look." Daddy hunted round with a look of preternatural sagacity about him. "Before the snows fell a man passed here with a red head, grey clothes, and a squint in his left eye. His trail shows that his brother has a grocer's shop and his wife smokes cigarettes on the sly."

"Oh, Daddy, how could you read all that?"

"It's easy enough, my son, when you get the knack of it. But look here, we are Indians on the war-trail, and don't you forget it if you value your scalp! Aha, here is Humpty Dumpty's trail!"

Uncle Pat had laid down a paper trail from this point, as Daddy well knew; so now the children were off like a little pack of eager harriers, following in and out among the bushes. Presently they had a rest.

"Great Chief, why does a wicked Paleface leave paper wherever he goes?"

Daddy made a great effort.

"He tears up the wicked letters he has written. Then he writes others even wickeder and tears them up in turn. You can see for yourself that he leaves them wherever he goes. Now, warriors, come along!"

Uncle Pat had dodged all over the limited garden, and the tribe followed his trail. Finally they stopped at a gap in the hedge which leads into the field. There was a little wooden hut in the field, where Daddy used to go and put up a printed cardboard: "WORKING." He found it a very good dodge when he wanted a quiet smoke and a nap. Usually there was nothing else in the field, but this time the Chief pushed the whole tribe hurriedly behind the hedge, and whispered to them to look carefully out between the branches.

In the middle of the field a tripod of sticks supported a kettle. At each side of it was a hunched-up figure in a coloured blanket. Uncle Pat had done his work skilfully and well.

"You must get them before they can reach their rifles," said the Chief. "What about their horses? Black Bear, move down the hedge and bring back word about their horses. If you see none give three whistles."

The whistles were soon heard, and the warrior returned.

"If the horses had been there, what would you have done?"

"Scalped them!" said Dimples.

"Silly ass!" said Laddie. "Who ever heard of a horse's scalp? You would stampede them."

"Of course," said the Chief. "If ever you see a horse grazing, you crawl up to it, spring on its back, and then gallop away with your head looking under its neck and only your foot to be seen. Don't you forget it. But we must scupper these rascals on our hunting-grounds."

"Shall we crawl up to them?"

"Yes, crawl up. Then when I give a whoop rush them. Take them alive. I wish to have a word with them first. Carry them into the hut. Go!"

Away went the eager little figures, the chubby babes and the two lithe, active boys. Daddy stood behind the bush watching them. They kept a line and tip-toed along to the camp of the strangers. Then on the Chief's signal they burst into a cry and rushed wildly with waving weapons into the camp of the Palefaces. A moment later the two pillow-made trappers were being dragged off into the hut by the whooping warriors. They were up-ended in one corner when the Chief entered, and the victorious Indians were dancing about in front of them.

"Anybody wounded?" asked the Chief.

"No, no."

"Have you tied their hands?"

With perfect gravity Red Buffalo made movements behind each of the pillows.

"They are tied, great Chief."

"What shall we do with them?"

"Cut off their heads!" shrieked Dimples, who was always the most bloodthirsty of the tribe, though in private life he had been known to weep bitterly over a squashed caterpillar.

"The proper thing is to tie them to a stake," said Laddie.

"What do you mean by killing our buffaloes?" asked Daddy, severely.

The prisoners preserved a sulky silence.

"Shall I shoot the green one?" asked Dimples, presenting his wooden pistol.

"Wait a bit!" said the Chief. "We had best keep one as a hostage and send the other back to say that unless the Chief of the Palefaces pays a ransom within three days——"

But at that moment, as a great romancer used to say, a strange thing happened. There was the sound of a turning key and the whole tribe of the Leatherskins was locked into the hut. A moment later a dreadful face appeared at the window, a face daubed with mud and overhung with grass, which drooped down from under a soft cap. The weird creature danced in triumph, and then stooped to set a light to some paper and shavings near the window.

"Heavens!" cried the Chief. "It is Yellow Snake, the ferocious Chief of the Bottlenoses!"

Flame and smoke were rising outside. It was excellently done and perfectly safe, but too much for the younger warriors. The key turned, the door opened, and two tearful babes were in the arms of the kneeling Lady. Red Buffalo and Black Bear were of sterner stuff.

"I'm not frightened, Daddy," said Laddie, though he looked a little pale.

"Nor me," cried Dimples, hurrying to get out of the hut.

"We'll lock the prisoners up with no food, and have a council of war upon them in the morning," said the Chief. "Perhaps we've done enough to-day."

"I rather think you have," said the Lady, as she soothed the poor little sobbing figures.

"That's the worst of having kids to play," said Dimples. "Fancy having a squaw in a war-party!"

"Never mind, we've had a jolly good Indian game," said Laddie, as the sound of a distant bell called them all to the nursery tea.

ACROSTICS.

With Acrostic No. 49, printed below, our ninth series of six acrostics begins. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 49.

Buy here at earliest dawn your fruit and flowers:
Or see the opera till the night's small hours.

1. As substitute for boot most useful found.
2. Engaged to Hamlet, then insane, then drowned.
3. For this is given the Victoria Cross.
4. Maker of peace: his death was Europe's loss.
5. The earliest t ing by all musicians learned.
6. By summer's sun to this your face is turned.

KING COLE.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 50.

In happier days the children flew
With spade and bucket to the first;
But now their last is sadly marred
By fear that Hun may do his worst.

1. To see one, to your window haste;
Or some may find it round their waist.

2. To question it's a vain affair,
Though some have said it answers "Where?"

3. At Woolwich is a mighty one,
And here you're sure to find a gun.

4. A word would seem to be most right,
But half will do to fill the light.

5. Though water all about it stand,
We safely say that it is land.

6. We much suspect that nowadays
Such chaperon may "go her ways."

7. An Austrian, a Turk, a Hun,
A Bulgar too, just now is one.

GEEGEE.

Answers to Acrostics 49 and 50 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, The Strand Magazine, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on August 9th.*

The answer to each acrostic must be on a separate piece of paper; at the foot of each answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else. This pseudonym should be limited to one word.

Two answers may be sent to any or every light.

Answer to No. 48.

1.	M	axi	M
2.	I	rgent	I
3.	D	eman	D
4.	S	he	W
5.	U	l	I
6.	M	i e	N
7.	M	uffe	T
8.	E	tt	E
9.	R	eporte	R

Notes.—Light 2. Geraint, gum; Agrigentum; Girgenti. 3. "Dem(i)," with "and"; a demand, what is required. 4. "He" between S. and W. 5. Pauline pane. 7. Curds and whey; Kurds, Wey. 8. Letter. 9. *Re* porter.

For the first light of No. 44 "Hebraistic" is also accepted, for the third light of this acrostic the proper answer is "Loo," and for the first light of No. 45 "Bien" is a valid alternative.

The Ballunatics.

By WINIFRED GRAHAM.

Illustrated by G. E. Studdy.

I.

MAJOR HERBERT, thoroughly tired from hard work at the War Office, arrived at his cousin's country house for a quiet week-end. Not that Lady Louisa was ever very quiet for long, and he felt a sharp pang of suspicion as she greeted him with sparkling eyes and an air of unusual elation.

"I am so glad you are here," she said, "because we have got a little spree on to-night. Those dear boys at the Barracks will be off to the Front next week, and they wanted me to get up what they call 'a rag' for them this evening. Of course it is quite an impromptu affair, just a Cinderella dance, fancy dress optional. Some of the officers are going to change into costume here; you won't give them away, will you, Alex? It is such a treat for them to get out of khaki."

Major Herbert sighed, and his forehead settled into a frown.

"If you had only told me this, Louisa," he said, "I wouldn't have come. I am just played out, and old enough to be hideously bored by anything of the kind. Be prepared for a surly visitor, for the very mention of a dance makes me feel like a bear with a sore head."

"Oh, I knew you would say that!" declared Lady Louisa, her young face breaking into fresh smiles. "But I don't mind betting that you won't be bored; nobody ever suffers from that complaint at my house. Now you will think me conceited, but I don't mind. I will have a bet with you. If you are bored, I will pay up a fiver to your pet charity; if you are not bored, you must give me the same sum for mine. Will you take the bet?"

"Certainly," he replied, "and I consider the fiver as good as won."

Lady Louisa drew a chair forward into which he sank gratefully, and continued talking as she poured out tea under the copper beech.

"There are quite a number of jokes on over to-night," she told her gloomy relative. "I have told civilians that comic costumes will be the most welcome, as we want to cheer up our fighting men. There are two of the quaintest brothers living in this neighbourhood, Mr. Francis and Ferdinand Basket. They are fat round twins of fifty-five. We never thought for a moment they would accept the dance invitation, but they seem delighted to come. I am now told by Basil that they have thought out most original costumes: they are coming as captive balloons! I don't know if they will rely on their own figures for the illusion, but it seems to be causing a good deal of amusement at the Barracks."

"Oh, so Basil is here!" remarked Major Herbert, as if the presence of Lady Louisa's young nephew somewhat condoned the fact that she was giving a dance in war-time.

"Not only Basil, but David too," she declared. "So with both my nephews quartered here I had to think out some entertainment, hadn't I?"

He grudgingly assented, as a servant came across the lawn with a telegram for Lady Louisa.

Her face fell as she read the message.

"It is all spoilt!" she cried. "Basil and David have been called away unexpectedly. Isn't that too cruel? I believe you will win your bet now. After such a disappointment I don't feel I shall be able to keep up anyone's spirits."

II.

THE dance was in full swing, and despite her prophecy, Lady Louisa, as usual, made a brilliant hostess. She introduced just the right people, and allowed no one to be a wallflower, except Major Herbert, who declined to be sociable.

Suddenly two of the strangest figures ever seen appeared in the doorway, and a loud voice announced: "The Ballunatics."

Lady Louisa absolutely gasped. She could not believe that Francis and Ferdinand Basket would ever achieve such a triumph in the way of costume. Their usually plump figures were entirely concealed by large artificial balloons, and their faces hidden behind absurd smiling masks, with abnormally large heads. They trailed behind them a series of ropes which proved most disconcerting in a ballroom. The dance music was just commencing with the first extra, and before anyone else started, the Ballunatics took the floor. Together they danced in a way which set the whole room in a roar. They rocked together like swaying balloons in a gale, the ropes swirling round in a way which effectually kept the floor clear. When their performance concluded, it was applauded as vociferously as any turn in a "Revue."

"Why, they are simply grand!" declared Lady Louisa, as she saw Major Herbert laughing for the first time. "We always looked upon

them as such a sober couple. I can't think how they can move so nimbly at their age."

She had hardly said the words before two more arrivals were announced: "Mr. Francis and Mr. Ferdinand Basket."

They wondered why she stared at them for a moment speechlessly, and their prim faces grew evening. We are sorry, Lady Louisa, that you gave credit to the story; we considered you would have known us better."

She duly apologized, then turned to her cousin with a bewildered air.

"Who *are* the Ballunatics?" she asked. "Just look how they are going on."

"THEY ROCKED TOGETHER LIKE SWAYING BALLOONS IN A GALE, THE ROPES SWIRLING ROUND IN A WAY WHICH EFFECTUALLY KEPT THE FLOOR CLEAR."

anxious; they feared they had done wrong by coming in discreet evening dress.

"I thought you were those two balloons," said Lady Louisa, when she recovered her breath.

The Basket brothers drew themselves up and inflated their chests with dignity.

"We know," they said, "that an absurd rumour spread through the Barracks that we were going to make fools of ourselves this

One of the pair had piled up some chairs which the other was mounting as if to make an effort to ascend. Just as this pantomime was in full swing, a heated and anxious arrival rushed unannounced into the room.

"David," cried Lady Louisa, "how lovely to see you! I thought you and Basil were called away."

Her nephew drew her aside with a mysterious air.

"Look here, aunt," he said, "Basil and I were really in the neighbourhood all the time on the track of spies. There are two men under suspicion. Now you have got all the officers here from the Barracks; what would you say if we told you that these two strangers, calling themselves 'The Ballunatics,' are making merry as a blind, and have really come on a deadly errand?"

The frightened hostess clutched his arm.

"What do you mean?" she whispered. "How could they harm us?"

"By suddenly turning a little tap inside the balloon which surrounds them, and letting forth poison gas, which would prevent any of these chaps here ever seeing any fighting again."

"But they would kill themselves into the bargain," she replied, disbelieving so sensational a statement.

"Not if under those grinning masked faces they are wearing their gas helmets for their personal protection."

He had not time to say more, for the dancers were flocking out to the inviting gardens. An awful terror seized the youthful hostess Here were all these lives practically in her hands; she must save them at any cost. As far as her own safety was concerned she had no fear.

The Ballunatics were still at the far end of the room, talking to a little group of people now slowly moving towards the door.

"David," she said, "I will detain these men in the ballroom, and the moment the others come out, shut the door and bolt it; don't let anyone enter again until I ring."

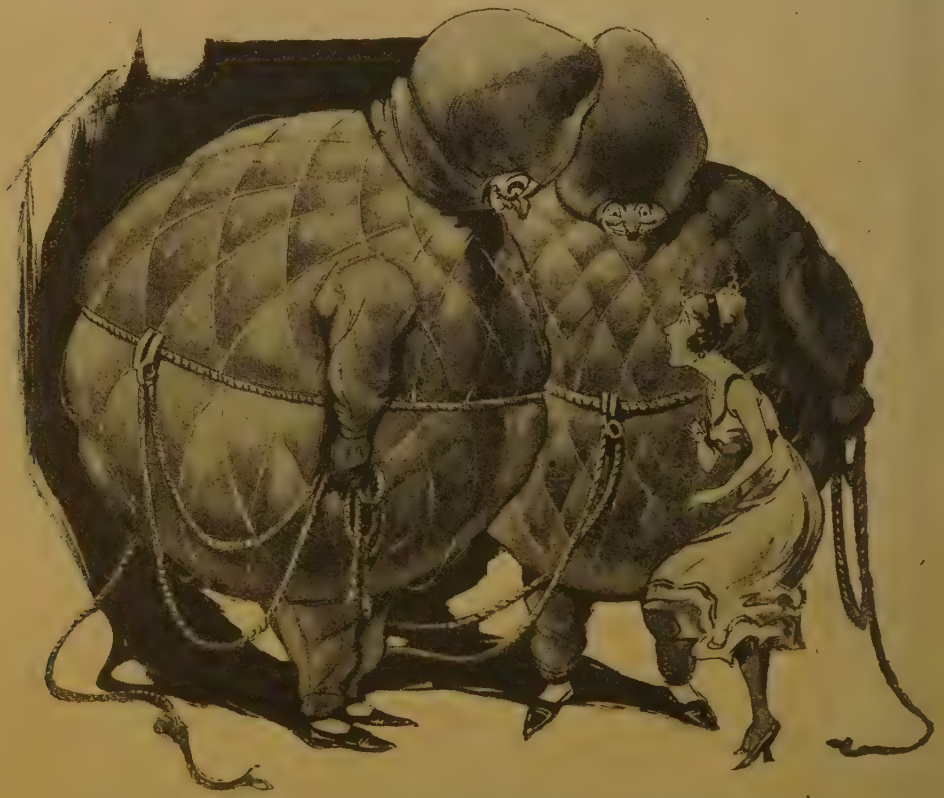
She gave David no time to argue, and just as the Ballunatics would have passed, she took each by the arm with a most charming smile, and drew them in again as if to impart a confidence. Then the door closed, and she realized she was alone with these alarming strangers.

"I have something private to say to you," she told them, "but I suppose I can't ask you to sit down, your costumes hardly permit of such a luxury."

They nodded their great goblin-like heads, and she thought she traced a German accent as they murmured together that she did them an honour.

"It is just this," she said. "I know what you are, and why you have come here. You will never be allowed out of this room until you have removed the deadly machinery with which you intend to poison my guests. I realize I am at your mercy, that you can kill me with a movement of your hands, but I am determined to protect those beneath my roof."

The Ballunatics appeared to tremble under their trappings. They drew back with a



"THE DOOR CLOSED, AND SHE REALIZED SHE WAS ALONE WITH THESE ALARMING STRANGERS."

"TWO SLIM FIGURES GRADUALLY WRIGGLED THEIR WAY OUT OF THE ENCASEMENT."

clatter of ropes, and flung up their hands despairingly.

"My lady," they cried, "you misjudge us. We are innocent men, we wish no harm."

"Then," she said, "it cannot hurt you to remove the balloons."

"We are rather scantily clad beneath," replied the boldest of the two. "Pray let us retire to a dressing-room for this ordeal."

"Oh, no!" said Lady Louisa, firmly, though her heart sank as she felt the delicacy of her position. "I am not going to give you a chance to escape."

The argument ceased with a sudden movement of a curtain, as Major Herbert, who had concealed himself, strode forward.

"I overhead what David said to you, Louisa," he began, "and I think you had better leave me to deal with these gentlemen."

"Oh, you fool, you fool!" she murmured, under her breath, realizing that here at least was a man worth destroying. Already she fancied she smelt a faint whiff of gas.

But Major Herbert did not look quite such a fool as he drew a revolver from his pocket.

"Now, you fellows," he said, "off with those clothes, or I shoot."

The Ballunatics at the sight of the revolver fell on their fat knees, and with loud weeping began unwinding the ropes round their waists. The inflated substance became looser, and two slim figures gradually wriggled their way out of the encasement. Then, with a war-whoop, the released Ballunatics joined hands and wildly danced round the Major and his now almost hysterical companion. They were none other than Basil and a young lieutenant, who only a week before had vowed to take Lady Louisa in, before they left the neighbourhood, for she, with her love for betting, had laid them two to one the thing was impossible. With the aid of David's story they had certainly succeeded in giving their astonished hostess a very unpleasant five minutes. But Lady Louisa was what they called a "sport," or they would never have dared to concoct the hoax which made the evening a phenomenal success. Everyone outside had by this time heard the rumour, which David, an accomplice, took care to circulate.

"Don't end it here," entreated Basil. "For goodness' sake smuggle us out of the window, and let your visitors think we have been mysteriously arrested. You can say the story is to be kept out of the papers since no harm has been done. We will make sure that the whole neighbourhood is under the impression that the Ballunatics were shot at dawn: people love a sensation. We will sneak in as late guests, and for once hear a real opinion of ourselves."

So Lady Louisa let them have their way, and in her county she is now looked upon as the most courageous woman of her time, one who tackled two dangerous spies without turning a hair.

Major Herbert, somewhat sheepishly, handed his cousin a fiver at breakfast.

"One cannot be bored," he said, "when a spice of danger creeps into a night of frivolity. Besides, Basil and his young friend ought to go on the stage when the war is over. Their antics gave me the first good laugh I have enjoyed for many a day."

"We certainly made things hum last night," acknowledged Lady Louisa, as she took the money for her Red Cross hospital. "I told you, didn't I, Alex? that it was never dull here!"

The Most Useful Invention or Discovery

Since 1850.

A SYMPOSIUM.

Sir Martin Conway — Sir William Crookes, O.M. — Mr. Will Crooks, M.P. — Sir James Crichton-Browne — Sir Arthur Conan Doyle — Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett — Mr. Frederic Harrison — Dr. Horton — Mr. H. M. Hyndman — Sir Harry Johnston — Mr. Coulson Kernahan — Lord Leverhulme — Sir Oliver Lodge — Sir John McClure — Prof. Flinders Petrie — Lord Rayleigh, O.M. — Lady Ritchie — Mr. George Bernard Shaw — Sir Frederick Treves, Bart. — Mr. Horace Annesley Vachell — Father Bernard Vaughan — Bishop Welldon — Mr. H. G. Wells — Mr. Richard Whiteing — Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C. — Sir James Yoxall, M.P.

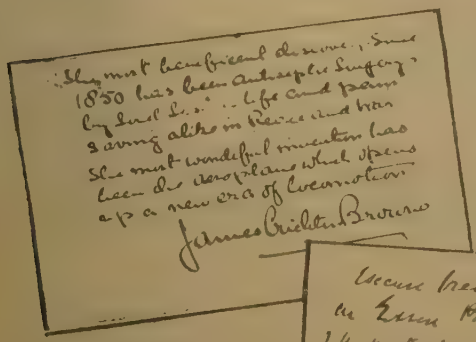
THE boundary between Invention and Discovery is difficult to fix exactly, for the first often grows out of the second, as Electric Traction, Wireless Telegraphy, the Electric Light out of the experimental discoveries of men like Faraday, and the Gramophone, the Microphone, the Telephone, and the Dictaphone out of the wave theory of sound. Such appliances as the X-Rays might be placed in both categories, as might Refrigeration as applied to cold storage. In fact, several correspondents have classed "Wireless" as a discovery, yet it is also an invention. Yet there *is* a distinction. It is seen plainly when the Typewriter is compared with the Antiseptic Treatment of Disease, when the Aeroplane is set beside the discovery of Radium, and is quite well enough marked for our present purpose, which is to focus public attention upon the vast importance of Invention and Research, and to turn the thoughts of the rising generation to matters which are likely to be of ever increasing importance to the nation.

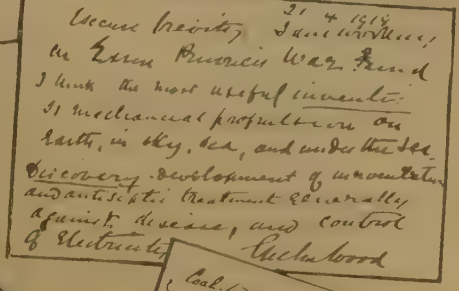
Sir Harry Johnston, K.C.B., the famous African explorer and administrator, writes: "I cannot bring myself to cite only one of the inventions of the last sixty years as the most useful or beneficent. I prefer to adopt your list of inventions, such as the Telephone, Wireless Telegraphy, Aviation, Submarine Navigation, the Turbine, the Gramophone, the Typewriter, the Dictaphone, the Caisson, the Kinematograph, Electric Traction, the Motor-car, the Sewing-machine, the Incandescent Gas-mantle, the Electric Light—to mention only a few—discoveries such as Evolution, the Polarization of Light, Instantaneous Photography, the X-Rays, Petrol, Radium, the Finsen Light, the Antiseptic Treatment of Disease, Inoculation, the use of Anæsthetics, Refrigeration, the Products of Coal-tar, and to add to it the Bicycle and the Pianola.

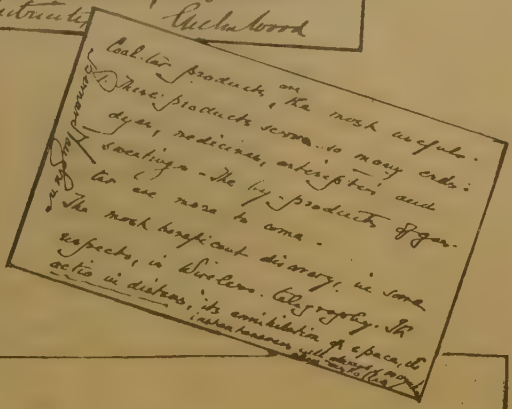
"These two additions are not equal in importance. The Pianola is a rich man's luxury, though through the goodness of rich men it is being made applicable to many a congregation of sick and wounded at the present time; but the Bicycle has been such a boon to mankind that there ought to be bicycle votive chapels in our greater churches."

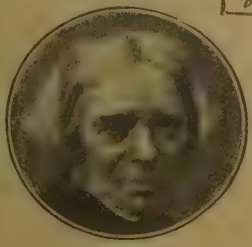
The list which Sir Harry Johnston adopts *in toto* fills Mr. George Bernard Shaw with scorn of our own and the nation's ignorance, and calls forth a characteristic exhibition of Shavian humour.

"The most significant modern discovery," writes the author of "Man and Superman," "is that Cabinet Ministers and editors of popular papers never know anything of history, even of the history of their own lifetimes. For example, *The Strand Magazine* believes that Turbines (120 B.C.), Typewriters, Sewing Machines (1790 here and 1846 in America), Evolution (1790),

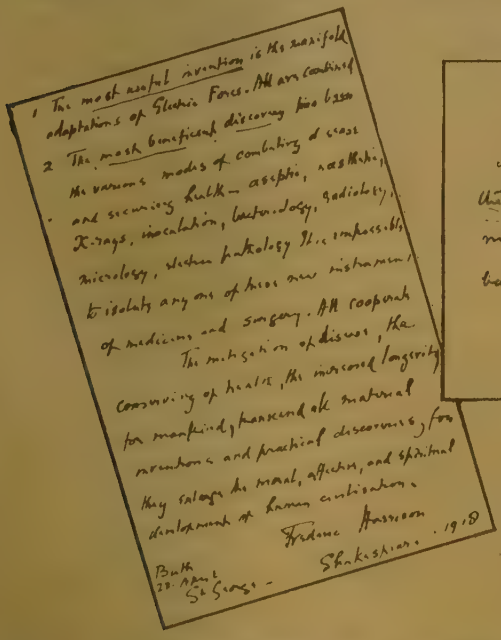


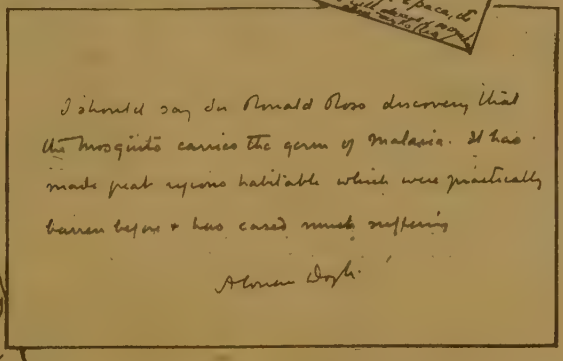






MICHAEL FARADAY.





for their beneficent influence those mainly connected with the names of Pasteur and Lister receive most votes from the distinguished people questioned. Mr. Frederic Harrison, one of the last survivors of the Grand Old Men of the Victorian Age, claims, whilst choosing as the "most useful invention the manifold adaptations of Electric Force," that "the most beneficent discovery has been the various modes of combating disease and securing health—aseptic, anæsthetic, X-rays, inoculation, bacteriology, radiology, micrology, electric pathology. It is impossible to isolate any one of these new instruments of medicine and surgery. All co-operate.

THOMAS EDISON.
Photo. Underwood & Underwood.

"The mitigation of disease, the conserving

the Polarization of Light (Newton), the Antiseptic Treatment of Disease, and Inoculation (submitted to by Voltaire and Catherine the Great), are among the novelties of the last fifty years.

"I conclude that the greatest invention of our time is Compulsory Education as a method of producing Invincible Ignorance."

We only regret that "G.B.S." did not go farther, and claim Aviation for that remote period in history when Dædalus and Icarus made their celebrated flights, Refrigeration for the Ice Age which preserved the mammoth for inspection if not for rations, and name Jonah as the first discoverer of Submarine Navigation.

Among the outstanding discoveries notable

CHARLES DARWIN.

EDWARD JENNER.

LOUIS PASTEUR.

LORD LISTER.
Photo. Elliott & Fry.

of health, the increased longevity of mankind, transcend all material inventions and practical discoveries, for they enlarge the moral, affective, and spiritual development of human civilization."

Lord Rayleigh, O.M., a former President of the Royal Society as well as recipient of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1904, endorses this verdict by his choice: "Pasteur's discoveries respecting fermentation and disease, leading to Lister's work, etc."

Sir James Crichton-Browne, the great specialist, follows with like testimony to the value of this epoch-making discovery. "The most beneficent discovery since 1850 has been Antiseptic Surgery by Lord Lister—life and pain saving, alike in peace and war."

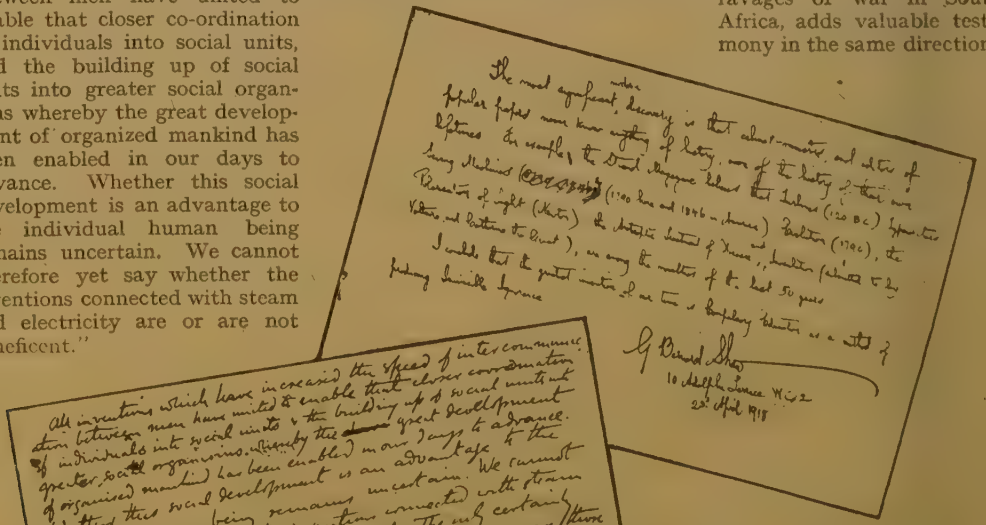
Sir Martin Conway, the eminent Alpinist and explorer of the Himalayas, takes a similar line.

"All inventions," he writes, "which have increased the speed of intercommunication between men have united to enable that closer co-ordination of individuals into social units, and the building up of social units into greater social organisms whereby the great development of organized mankind has been enabled in our days to advance. Whether this social development is an advantage to the individual human being remains uncertain. We cannot therefore yet say whether the inventions connected with steam and electricity are or are not beneficent."

Then he adds: "The only certainly beneficent inventions of the last hundred years are those by which suffering has been reduced and health improved. Chief among these are Anæsthetic and Antiseptic Methods of Surgery—in fact, the inventions and discoveries that have come out of the laboratories where Vivisection has been used for purposes of research."

Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., makes an identical choice. The distinguished soldier, who saw war at close quarters long before 1914, says: "I think the most useful invention is Mechanical Propulsion in earth, in sky, on sea, and under sea; the most beneficent discovery the development of Inoculation and Antiseptic Treatment generally against disease, and control of Electricity."

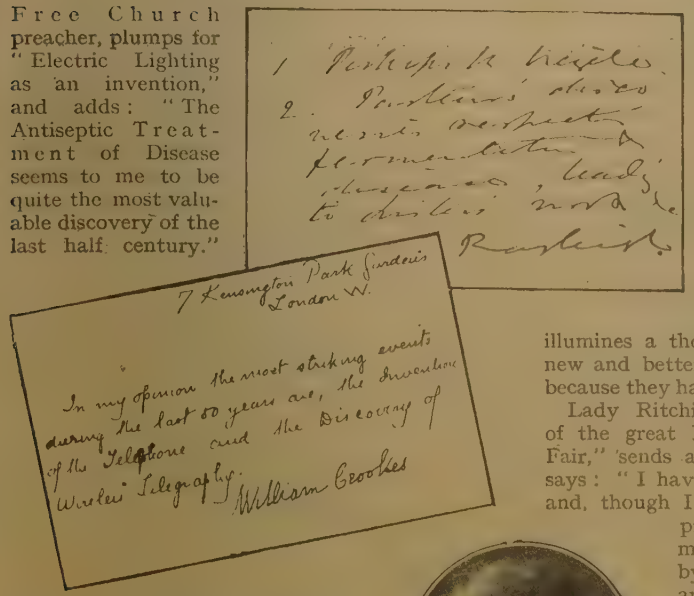
Sir Frederick Treves, Bart., who performed the operation for appendicitis on the late King Edward, and who saw with his own eyes the ravages of war in South Africa, adds valuable testimony in the same direction:


All inventions which have increased the speed of intercommunication between men have united to enable that closer co-ordination of individuals into social units & the building up of social units into greater social organisms whereby the great development of organised mankind has been enabled in our days to advance. Whether this social development is an advantage to the individual human being remains uncertain. We cannot therefore yet say whether the inventions connected with steam & electricity are or are not beneficent. The only certainly beneficent inventions of the last hundred years are those by which suffering has been reduced & health improved. Chief among these are anæsthetics & antiseptic methods of surgery — in fact all the inventions & discoveries that have come out of laboratories where vivisection has been used for purposes of research.
Martin Conway

"The most beneficent discovery of the last fifty years was that of Antiseptic Surgery by Lord Lister. It has made modern surgery and its astounding results possible. The present war, without antiseptic measures, would be too horrible and too destructive to contemplate."

Dr. Horton, the distinguished

Free Church preacher, plumps for "Electric Lighting as an invention," and adds: "The Antiseptic Treatment of Disease seems to me to be quite the most valuable discovery of the last half century."


7 Kensington Park Gardens
London W.
In my opinion the most striking events during the last 50 years are, the invention of the Telephone and the Discovery of Wireless Telegraphy.
William Crookes

Similarly another distinguished Nonconformist, Sir John McClure, Head Master of Mill Hill School, chooses Wireless as the most useful invention, and, as a discovery, the Antiseptic Treatment of Disease, adding: "I cannot well separate usefulness from beneficence in either case," and Professor Flinders Petrie, the famous Egyptologist, divides his vote between "Vacuum and Cold Storage preservation of food," and "Microbes and Prophylactic and Aseptic Treatment."

MME. CURIE.
Photo. Henri Manuel.

Anæsthetics have been more than once referred to already, and they take a high place in the voting. Bishop Welldon, Dean of Manchester, writes: "If I ask myself what has been the most beneficent discovery of the last fifty or sixty years, I cannot doubt that it has been the discovery of Anæsthetic Medicines. It is indeed a little older than fifty or sixty years; for I think Sir James Simpson first made use of chloroform as an anæsthetic in 1847. Nothing in all history has done so much to relieve human suffering, and thereby to facilitate the progress of surgery. In the public gardens of Boston, U.S.A., there is, if my memory serves me right, a monument which commemorates the first use of ether as an anæsthetic in the State hospital of Massachusetts, and on the base are inscribed the sacred words: 'Neither shall there be any more pain.' Hardly any monument in the world has so deeply impressed me as that."

Mr. Horace Annesley Vachell, whose novel "The Hill" has done for his old school, Harrow, what "Tom Brown's School Days" did for Rugby, chooses "Electric Light, because it illumines a thousand avenues leading us on to new and better conditions," and "Anæsthetics, because they have helped to ameliorate suffering."

Lady Ritchie, the honoured elder daughter of the great Englishman who wrote "Vanity Fair," sends a delightful postcard, on which she says: "I have been interested in your inquiry and, though I am not able to grasp the many problems and facts which grow more wonderful and dazzling day by day as one lives on, I will answer from my own point of view, which may be that of some of my contemporaries. We are not always at war, and in peace I am inclined to think that the invention that has been most useful to the greatest number in the last fifty years is the Bicycle, which is for all conditions of life and people, health, work, friendship; for town and for country places, and which benefits the poor no less than the more prosperous classes. Then, for discovery, the use of Anæsthetics in peace time and war time seems to be like light in the darkness of pain and suffering."

At this point Lady Ritchie breaks into a charming personal reminiscence. "Rather to my surprise," she says, "a nurse I consulted suggested Gramophones, and two more backed her up, saying the good effect was so wonderful in hospitals. If you would tell me in which number of THE STRAND MAGAZINE the answers will be given I should be glad to supply the nurses with a copy."

Lady Ritchie is the only correspondent who gives the gramophone a good word, although, as an invention bordering on the uncanny, it vies with Wireless Telegraphy itself; but the

SIR JAMES SIMPSON.

HON. C. A. PARSONS.
Photo. Elliott & Fry.

ALEX. GRAHAM BELL.

ELIAS HOWE.

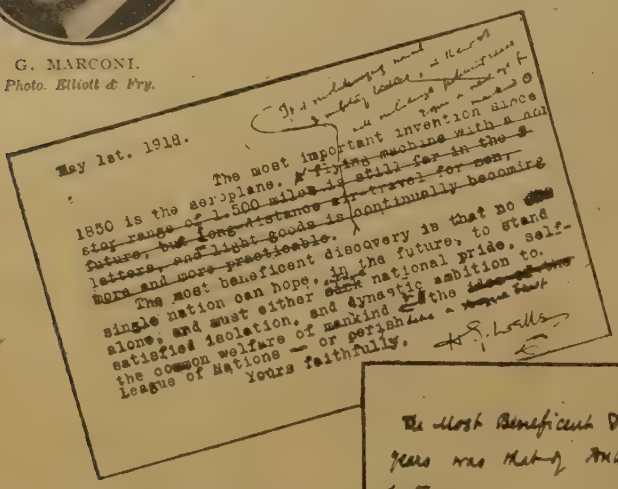
G. MARCONI.
Photo. Elliott & Fry.

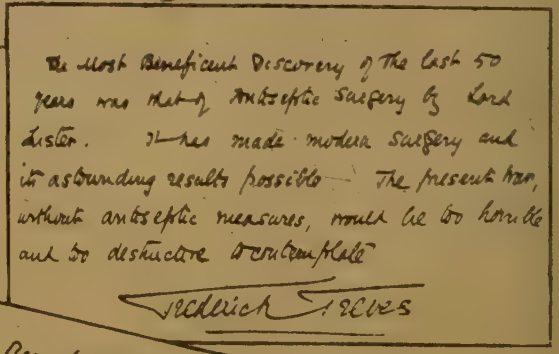
humble "push-bike" is not without apologists in addition to Sir Harry Johnston, already quoted. Another greatly revered lady, Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, the widow of the famous blind Postmaster-General, Henry Fawcett, agrees with "Anne Thackeray" as to the Bicycle. She calls it "the most useful invention of the last fifty years, because it has set millions of people free to move freely from place to place in pursuit of occupation, recreation, and all other activities." These two ladies enjoy the support of Lord Rayleigh, O.M., who, in answer to the question, "Which is the most useful invention?" replies: "Perhaps the bicycle."

As far as invention is concerned, the Aeroplane and Wireless Telegraphy lead, with the Telephone and Motor Traction close runners-up. Mr. Richard Whiteing, the philosophical author of "No. 5, John Street," writes: "Out and away the Telephone and Wireless. The first especially is as great as the locomotive in its labour-saving effects on time and distance as hindrances to human intercourse, and in its addition to the productive powers of the race."

Sir Oliver Lodge, the distinguished scientist and Principal of Birmingham University, chooses "Aerial Navigation" and "The Electrical nature of matter, for both have far-reaching importance not fully foreseen at present." Sir William Crookes, O.M., confessedly one of the foremost electricians and chemists of the age, makes the same choice as Mr. Richard Whiteing. He writes: "In my opinion the most striking events during the last fifty years are the invention of the Telephone and the discovery of Wireless Telegraphy."

The eminence of Sir William Crookes himself receives remarkable testimony in the reply of the philosophic Socialist, Mr. H. M. Hyndman, who writes: "The most important discovery and invention for the immediate needs of mankind is Sir William Crookes' exposition how to obtain nitrogen for land enrichment and other purposes from the air. This great discovery was made more than twenty years ago. As it was due to an Englishman, it was, of course, entirely neglected by our Government and our people.


May 1st. 1918.
The most important invention since
1850 is the aeroplane.
stop range of 1,500 miles is still far in the
future, but long distance travel for cost
letters, and light goods is continually becoming
more and more practicable.
The most beneficent discovery is that no
single nation can hope,
alone, and shut either
satisfied isolation, and dynastic ambition to.
the common welfare of mankind
League of Nations — or perish
Yours faithfully.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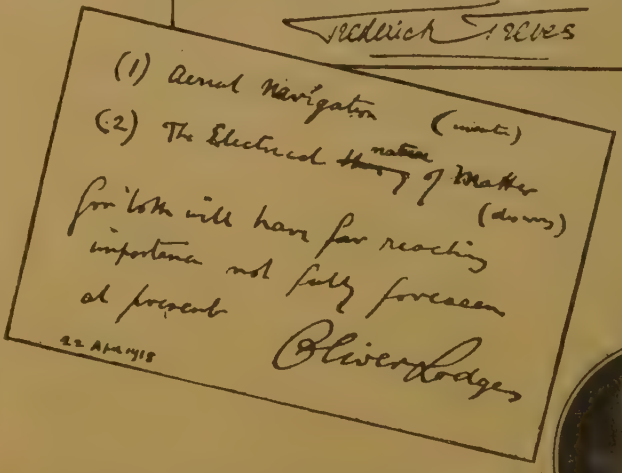
Rudyard Kipling


(1) Aerial Navigation (wants)
(2) The Electrical nature of Matter (shows)
for both will have far reaching
importance not fully foreseen
at present
22 April 18
Oliver Lodge

ORVILLE WRIGHT.
Photo. E.N.A.

WILBUR WRIGHT.
Photo E.N.A.

It has been of immense use to Germany during the war, and was practically applied by a French company (who obtained heavy water power to run the necessary machinery) in Norway."

Bishop Welldon says: "I feel I must say that Aeronautical Science is or will be more important to humanity than any other scientific achievement of the past fifty or sixty years. At present it is almost necessarily associated in men's minds with the horrors of war. But neither the aeroplane nor, I think, the airship, was originally meant to be an instrument of destruction; and the aeroplane or the airship, as giving man the command of the one element which had until recently defied him, must, in its ultimate influence, rank with the printing press and the steamship. I only hope and pray that it may be used for the good and not for the injury of mankind."

Sir James Crichton-Browne answers: "The most useful invention has been the Aeroplane, which opens up a new era of locomotion," and Mr. H. G. Wells writes: "The most important invention since 1850 is the Aeroplane. It is revolutionizing naval and military tactics; in the end it will revolutionize political ideas and open a new age for mankind."

Mr. Will Crooks, M.P., a man of the people, votes for Wireless Telegraphy as the most beneficent discovery, and makes the characteristic choice, doubtless by reason of his intimate knowledge of East-end hospitals and infirmaries, of the Finsen Light as the most useful invention.

Father Bernard Vaughan is the only correspondent who chooses the products of Coal-tar. He says: "Coal-tar products serve so many ends—dyes, medicines, antiseptics, and sweetings. The by-products of gas-tar are more to come." He adds further: "The most beneficent discovery, in some respects, is Wireless Telegraphy. Its *actio in distans*, its annihilation of space, its instantaneous call everywhere where installed."

Sir James Yoxall, M.P., the versatile Secretary of the National Union of Teachers and eminent connoisseur, makes the distinctive choice of "Natural Selection as an explanation of those variations which induce evolutionary progress; this has transformed," he adds, "all scientific and philosophical thought, but even yet has only covered half its future province." Also, like Sir Martin Conway, he considers "Motor-traction, by quickening locomotion, increasing the amount of it, and reducing the amount of heavy human toil," to be the most useful invention.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle also makes a "lonely" selection: "I should say Sir Ronald Ross's discovery that the mosquito carries the germ of malaria is the most beneficent discovery. It has made great regions habitable which were practically barren before, and has eased much suffering."

Several distinguished correspondents define the word "discovery" in its broadest sense, considering probably that a discovery in the realm of ethics is even more important and beneficent than one in physical science. Lord Leverhulme, the founder of Port Sunlight, writes, for instance: "In my opinion the greatest discovery of the twentieth century has been that making war on peaceful neighbours does not pay, and there is immense hope for the future of mankind in this discovery. We are greatly indebted to Mr. Norman Angell for being the first to call attention to this great fact. All peaceful arts will flourish and Discovery and Invention will be further stimulated the more this great fact is grasped."

Mr. H. G. Wells, too, considers that "The most beneficent discovery is that no single nation can hope, in the future, to stand alone, and must either subdue national pride, self-satisfied isolation, and dynastic ambition to the common welfare of mankind and the League of Nations—or perish like a rogue beast."

Mrs. Fawcett, the most eminent Feminist in the world to-day, says: "The most useful discovery of the last fifty years is the professional and industrial capacity of women, because (although it is still only in process of development) it is the greatest engine for the prevention of waste which mankind has yet made."

Mr. Coulson Kernahan, author of "God and the Ant," and one of the earliest advocates of National Service, fitly closes this Symposium by writing: "Our world has been revolutionized by Invention and Discovery during the last fifty or sixty years. Wireless Telegraphy and Aviation I always thought would come soon. Inoculation as a disease preventive, and Anæsthetics as preventives of human suffering, seem to me the greatest blessings of the sort ever conferred upon the world. One recalls with pride that Jenner and Lister were British born.

"Incidentally I deplore the fact that, whereas in Germany, France, and America scientific research is encouraged and sometimes subsidized, in this country, unless a man of science has private means, he has often to turn to something else for a living. Germany's readiness to encourage scientific research, and England's neglect to do so, have heavily handicapped us in the war.

"The most horrible discovery is that human nature and a nation can sink to the level of some Germans. The greatest discovery is that British soldiers can show sacrifice which is almost godlike."

From this Symposium we get some idea how large a place the English-speaking race has filled in the modern history of Invention and Discovery. The war has speeded up all the mechanical processes of mankind, and sharpened the wits of men to intensive production and the most wonderful devices of defence and attack. It remains to be seen whether in the coming days of peace the lessons learned in war will retain their force. Certain it is that the nation which values knowledge more than arms will win the foremost place in the world.

Jeeves and the Chump Cyril

by P. G. Wodehouse

Illustrated by A. Leete.

YOU know, the longer I live in New York, the more clearly I see that half the trouble in this bally world is caused by the light-hearted and thoughtless way in which chappies dash off letters of introduction and hand them to other chappies to deliver to chappies of the third part. It's one of those things that make you wish you were living in the Stone Age. What I mean to say is, if a fellow in those days wanted to give anyone a letter of introduction, he had to spend a month or so carving it on a large-sized boulder, and the chances were that the other chappie got so sick of lugging the thing round in the hot sun that he dropped it after the first mile. But nowadays it's so easy to write letters of introduction that everybody does it without a second thought, with the result that some perfectly harmless cove like myself gets in the soup. The last time that happened to me was when the chump Cyril Bassington-Bassington came over from England with a letter from my Aunt Agatha.

This chump Bassington-Bassington would seem from contemporary accounts to have blown in one morning at seven-forty-five. He was given the respectful raspberry by my man Jeeves, and told to try again about three hours later, when there would be a sporting chance of my having sprung from my bed with a glad cry to welcome another day and all that sort of thing. Which was rather decent of Jeeves, by the way, for it so happened that there was a slight estrangement, a touch of coldness, a bit of a row in other words, between us at the moment because of some rather priceless purple socks which I was wearing against his wishes: and a lesser man might easily have snatched at the chance of getting back at me a bit by loosing Cyril into my bedchamber at a moment when I couldn't have stood a two-minutes' conversation with my dearest pal. You know how it is. The fierce rush of modern life, the cheery supper-party, the wine when it is red, and so forth. Well, what I mean to say is, as far as I'm concerned, what with one thing and another, the old bean is a trifle slow at getting into its stride in the morning, and, until I have had my early cup of tea and brooded on life for a bit absolutely undisturbed, I'm not much of a lad for the merry chit-chat.

So Jeeves very sportingly shot Cyril out into the crisp morning air, and didn't let me know of his existence till he brought his card in with my tea.

"And what might all this be, Jeeves?" I said, giving the thing the glassy gaze.

"The gentleman called to see you earlier in the day, sir."

"Good Lord, Jeeves! You don't mean to say the day starts earlier than this?"

"He desired me to say he would return later, sir."

"I've never heard of him. Have *you* ever heard of him, Jeeves?"

"I am familiar with the name Bassington-Bassington, sir. There are three branches of the Bassington-Bassington family—the Shropshire Bassington-Bassingtons, the Hampshire Bassington-Bassingtons, and the Kent Bassington-Bassingtons."

"England seems pretty well stocked up with Bassington-Bassingtons."

"Tolerably so, sir."

"No chance of a sudden shortage, I mean, what?"

"Presumably not, sir."

"And what sort of a specimen is this one?"

"I could not say, sir, on such short acquaintance."

"Will you give me a sporting two to one, Jeeves, judging from what you have seen of him, that this chappie is not a blighter or an excrescence?"

"No, sir. I should not care to venture such odds."

"I knew it. Well, the only thing that remains to be discovered is what kind of a blighter he is."

"Time will tell, sir. The gentleman brought this letter for you, sir."

"What-ho! What-ho! What-ho! I say, Jeeves, this is from my Aunt Agatha!"

"Indeed, sir?"

I gave the thing the rapid eye. The wassail-bowl which had flowed overnight with a fairly steady gush into the small hours had left me rather pessimistic that morning, and the moment I saw Aunt Agatha's handwriting something seemed to tell me that Fate was about to let me have it in the lower ribs once again. It's a rummy thing. Aunt Agatha is the one person in the world I daren't offend, and it always happens that everyone she sends to me with letters of introduction gets into trouble of some sort. And she always seems to think that I ought to have watched over them while they were in New York like a blend of nursemaid and guardian angel. Which, of course, is a bit thick and pretty scaly.

There was only one gleam of comfort.

"He isn't going to stay in New York long, Jeeves. He's headed for Washington. Going to give the chappies there the up-and-down before taking a whirl at the Diplomatic Service. So he ought to be leaving us eftsoons or right speedily, thank goodness. I should say a lunch and a couple of dinners would about meet the case, what?"

"I fancy that should be entirely adequate, sir."

He started to put out my things, and there was an awkward sort of silence.

"Not those socks, Jeeves," I said, gulping a bit but having a dash at the careless, off-hand sort of tone. "Give me the purple ones."

"I beg your pardon, sir?" said Jeeves, coldly.

"Those jolly purple ones."

"Very good, sir."

He lugged them out of the drawer as if he were a vegetarian fishing a caterpillar out of his salad. You could see he was feeling deeply. Deuced painful and all that, this sort of thing, but a chappie has got to assert himself every now and then, if he doesn't want his valet to treat him as an absolute serf. Absolutely.

I was looking for Cyril to show up again any time after breakfast, but he didn't appear: so, towards one o'clock, I trickled out to the club, where I had a date to feed the Wooster face with a pal of mine of the name of Caffyn—George Caffyn, a fellow who writes plays and what not. He was a bit late, but bobbed up finally, saying that he had been kept at a rehearsal of his new piece, "Ask Dad," and we started in. We had just reached the coffee, when the waiter came up and said that Jeeves wanted to see me.

Jeeves was in the waiting-room. He gave the socks one pained look as I came in, then averted his eyes.

"Mr. Bassington-Bassington has just telephoned, sir."

"Why interrupt my lunch to tell me that, Jeeves? It means little or nothing in my young life."

"He was somewhat insistent that I should inform you at the earliest possible moment, sir, as he had been arrested and would be glad if you could step round and bail him out."

"Arrested!"

"Yes, sir."

"What for?"

"He did not favour me with his confidence in that respect, sir."

"This is a bit thick, Jeeves."

"Precisely, sir."

"I suppose I had better totter round, what?"

"That might be the judicious course, sir."

So I collected old George, who very decently volunteered to stagger along with me, and we hopped into a taxi. We sat around at the police-station for a bit on a wooden bench in a sort of ante-room, and presently a policeman appeared, leading in Cyril.

"Halloa! Halloa! Halloa!" I said. "What?

My experience is that a fellow never really looks his best just after he's come out of a cell. When I was up at Oxford, I used to have a regular job bailing out a pal of mine who never failed to get pinched every Boat-Race night, and he always looked like something that had been dug up by the roots. Cyril was in pretty much the same sort of shape. He had a black eye and a torn collar, and altogether was nothing to write home about—especially if one was writing to Aunt Agatha. He was a thin, tall chappie with a lot of light hair and pale-blue goggly eyes which made him look like one of the rarer kind of fish. He had just that expression of peeved surprise that one of those sheep's-head fish in Florida has when you haul it over the side of the boat.

"I got your message," I said.

"Oh, are you Bertie Wooster?"

"Absolutely. And this is my pal George Caffyn. Writes plays and what not, don't you know."

We all shook hands, and the policeman, having retrieved a piece of chewing-gum from the under-side of a chair, where he had parked it against a rainy day, went off into a corner and began to contemplate the infinite.

"This is a rotten country," said Cyril.

"Oh, I don't know, you know, don't you know!" I said.

"We do our best," said George.

"Old George is an American," I explained. "Writes plays, don't you know, and what not."

"Of course, I didn't invent the country," said George. "That was Columbus. But I shall be delighted to consider any improvements you may suggest and lay them before the proper authorities."

"Well, why don't the policemen in New York dress properly?" George took a look at the chewing officer across the room.

"I don't see anything missing," he said.

"I mean to say, why don't they wear helmets like they do in London? Why do they look like postmen? It isn't fair on a fellow. Makes

it dashed confusing. I was simply standing on the pavement, looking at things, when a fellow who looked like a postman prodded me in the ribs with a club. I didn't see why I should have postmen prodding me. Why the dickens should a fellow come three thousand miles to be prodded by postmen?"

"The point is well taken," said George. "What did you do?"

"I gave him a shove, you know. I've got a frightfully hasty temper, you know. All the Bassington-Bassingtons have got frightfully hasty tempers, don't you know! One of these days the clan will go hurting somebody. And then he biffed me in the eye and lugged me off to this beastly place."

"I'll fix it, old son," I said. And I hauled out the bank-roll and went off to open negotiations, leaving Cyril to talk to George. I don't mind admitting that I was a bit perturbed. There were furrows in the old brow, and I had a kind of foreboding feeling. As long as this chump stayed in New York, I was sort of responsible for him: and he didn't give me the impression of being the species of cove a reasonable chappie would care to be responsible for for more than about three minutes.

I mused with a considerable amount of tensity over Cyril that night, when I had got home and Jeeves had brought me the final whisky. I couldn't help feeling that this visit of his to America was going to be one of those times that try men's souls and what not. I hauled out Aunt Agatha's letter of introduction and re-read it, and there was no getting away from the fact that she undoubtedly appeared to be somewhat wrapped up in this blighter and to consider it my mission in life to shield him from harm while on the premises. I was deuced thankful that he had taken such a liking for George Caffyn, old George being a steady sort of cove. After I had got him out of his dungeon-cell, he and old George had gone off together, as chummy as brothers, to watch the afternoon rehearsal of "Ask Dad." There was some talk, I gathered, of their dining together. I felt pretty easy in my mind while George had his eye on him.

I had got about as far as this in my meditations, when Jeeves came in with a telegram. At least, it wasn't a telegram: it was a cable—from Aunt Agatha, and this is what it said:—

"Has Cyril Bassington-Bassington called yet? On no account introduce him into theatrical circles. Vitally important. Letter follows."

I read it a couple of times

"This is rummy, Jeeves!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Very rummy and dashed disturbing!"

"Will there be anything further to-night, sir?"

Of course, if he was going to be as bally unsympathetic as that there was nothing to be done. My idea had been to show him the cable and ask his advice. But if he was letting those purple socks rankle to that extent, the good old *noblesse oblige* of the Woosters couldn't lower itself to the extent of pleading with the man. Absolutely not. So I gave it a miss.

"Nothing more, thanks."

"Good night, sir."

"Good night."

He floated away, and I sat down to think the thing over. I had been directing the best efforts of the old bean to the problem for a matter of half an hour, when there was a ring at the bell. I went to the door, and there was Cyril, looking pretty festive.

"I'll come in for a bit if I may," he said. "Got something rather priceless to tell you." He curveted past me into the sitting-room, and when I got there after shutting the front door I found him reading Aunt Agatha's cable and giggling in a rummy sort of manner. "Oughtn't to have looked at this, I suppose. Caught sight of my name and read it without thinking. I say, Wooster, old friend of my youth, this is rather funny. Do you mind if I have a drink? Thanks awfully and all that sort of rot. Yes, it's rather funny, considering what I came to tell you. Jolly old Caffyn has given me a small part in that musical comedy of his, "Ask Dad." Only

"PRESENTLY A POLICEMAN APPEARED, LEADING IN CYRIL."

a bit, you know, but quite tolerably ripe. I'm feeling frightfully braced, don't you know!"

He drank his drink, and went on. He didn't seem to notice that I wasn't jumping about the room, yapping with joy.

"You know, I've always wanted to go on the stage, you know," he said. "But my jolly old guv'nor wouldn't stick it at any price. Put the old Waukeesi down with a bang, and turned bright purple whenever the subject was mentioned. That's the real reason why I came over here, if you want to know. I knew there wasn't a chance of my being able to work this stage wheeze in London without somebody getting onto it and tipping off the guv'nor, so I rather brainily sprang the scheme of popping over to Washington to broaden my mind. There's nobody to interfere on this side, you see, so I can go right ahead!"

I tried to reason with the poor chump.

"But your guv'nor will have to know some time."

"That'll be all right. I shall be the jolly old star by then, and he won't have a leg to stand on."

"It seems to me he'll have one leg to stand on while he kicks me with the other."

"Why, where do you come in? What have you got to do with it?"

"I introduced you to George Caffyn."

"So you did, old top, so you did. I'd quite forgotten. I ought to have thanked you before. Well, so long. There's an early rehearsal of 'Ask Dad' to-morrow morning, and I must be toddling. Rummy the thing should be called 'Ask Dad,' when that's just what I'm not going to do. See what I mean, what, what? Well, pip-pip!"

"Toodle-oo!" I said, sadly, and the blighter scudded off. I dived for the 'phone and called up George Caffyn.

"I say, George, what's all this about Cyril Bassington-Bassington?"

"What about him?"

"He tells me you've given him a part in your show."

"Oh, yes. Just a few lines."

"But I've just had fifty-seven cables from home telling me on no account to let him go on the stage."

"I'm sorry. But Cyril is just the type I need for that part. He's simply got to be himself."

"It's pretty tough on me, George, old man. My Aunt Agatha sent this blighter over with a letter of introduction to me, and she will hold me responsible."

"She'll cut you out of her will?"

"It isn't a question of money. But—of course, you've never met my Aunt Agatha, so it's rather hard to explain. But she's a sort of human vampire-bat, and she'll make things most fearfully unpleasant for me when I go back to England. She's the kind of woman who comes and rags you before breakfast, don't you know."

"Well, don't go back to England, then. Stick here and become President."

"But, George, old top——!"

"Good night!"

"But, I say, George, old man!"

"You didn't get my last remark. It was 'Good night!' You Idle Rich may not need any sleep, but I've got to be bright and fresh in the morning. God bless you!"

I felt as if I hadn't a friend in the world. I was so jolly well worked up that I went and banged on Jeeves's door. It wasn't a thing I'd have cared to do as a rule, but it seemed to me that now was the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party, so to speak, and that it was up to Jeeves to rally round the young master, even if it broke up his beauty-sleep.

Jeeves emerged in a brown dressing-gown.

"Sir?"

"Deuced sorry to wake you up, Jeeves, and what not, but all sorts of dashed disturbing things have been happening."

"I was not asleep. It is my practice, on retiring, to read a few pages of some instructive book."

"That's good! What I mean to say is, if you've just finished exercising the old bean, it's probably in mid-season form for tackling problems. Jeeves, Mr. Bassington-Bassington is going on the stage!"

"Indeed, sir?"

"Ah! The thing doesn't hit you! You don't get it properly! Here's the point. All his family are most fearfully dead against his going on the stage. There's going to be no end of trouble if he isn't headed off. And, what's worse, my Aunt Agatha will blame *me*, you see. And you know what *she* is!"

"Very much so, sir!"

"Well, can't you think of some way of stopping him?"

"Not, I confess, at the moment, sir.'

"Well, have a stab at it."

"I will give the matter my best consideration, sir. Will there be anything further to-night?"

"I hope not! I've had all I can stand already."

"Very good, sir."

He popped off.

The part which old George had written for the chump Cyril took up about two pages of typescript: but it might have been Hamlet, the way that poor, misguided pinhead worked himself to the bone over it. I suppose, if I heard him his lines once, I did it a dozen times in the first couple of days. He seemed to think that my only feeling about the whole affair was one of enthusiastic admiration, and that he could rely on my support and sympathy. What with trying to imagine how Aunt Agatha was going to take this thing and being woken up out of the dreamless in the small hours every other night to give my opinion of some new bit of business which Cyril had invented, I became more or less the good old shadow. And all the time Jeeves remained still pretty cold and distant about the purple socks. It's this sort of thing that ages a chappie, don't you know, and makes his youthful *joie-de-vivre* go a bit groggy at the knees.

In the middle of it Aunt Agatha's letter

arrived. It took her about six pages to do justice to Cyril's father's feelings in regard to his going on the stage and about six more to give me a kind of sketch of what she would say, think, and do if I didn't keep him clear of injurious influences while he was in America. The letter came by the afternoon mail, and left me with a pretty firm conviction that it wasn't a thing I ought to keep to myself. I didn't even wait to ring the bell: I whizzed for the kitchen, bleating for Jeeves, and butted into the middle of a regular tea-party of sorts. Seated at the table were a depressed-looking cove who might have been a valet or something and a boy in a Norfolk suit. The valet-chappie was drinking a whisky and soda, and the boy was being tolerably rough with some jam and cake.

"Oh, I say, Jeeves!" I said. "Sorry to interrupt the feast of reason and flow of soul and so forth, but——"

At this juncture the small boy's eye hit me like a bullet and stopped me in my tracks. It was one of those cold, clammy, accusing sort of eyes—the kind that make you reach up to see if your tie is straight: and he looked at me as if I were some sort of unnecessary product which Cuthbert the Cat had brought in after a ramble among the local ash-cans. He was a stoutish infant with a lot of freckles and a good deal of jam on his face.

"Halloa! Halloa! Halloa!" I said. "What?" There didn't seem much else to say.

The stripling stared at me in a nasty sort of way through the jam. He may have loved me at first sight; but the impression he gave me was that he didn't think a lot of me and wasn't betting much that I would improve a great deal on acquaintance. I had a kind of feeling that I was about as popular with him as a cold Welsh rabbit.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"My name? Oh, Wooster, don't you know, and what not."

"My pop's richer than you are!"

That seemed to be all about me. The child having said his say, started in on the jam again. I turned to Jeeves.

"I say, Jeeves, can you spare a moment? I want to show you something."

"Very good, sir." We toddled into the sitting-room.

"Who is your little friend, Sidney the Sunbeam, Jeeves?"

"The young gentleman, sir?"

"It's a loose way of describing him, but I know what you mean."

"I trust I was not taking a liberty in entertaining him, sir?"

"Not a bit. If that's your idea of a large afternoon, go ahead."

"I happened to meet the young gentleman taking a walk with his father's valet, sir, whom I used to know somewhat intimately in London, and I ventured to invite them both to join me here."

"Well, never mind about him, Jeeves. Read this letter." He gave it the up-and-down.

"Very disturbing, sir!" was all he could find to say.

"What are we going to do about it?"

"Time may provide a solution, sir."

"On the other hand, it mayn't, what?"

"Extremely true, sir."

We'd got as far as this, when there was a ring at the door. Jeeves shimmered off, and Cyril blew in, full of good cheer and blitheringness.

"I say, Wooster, old thing," he said, "I want your advice. You know this jolly old part of mine. How ought I to dress it? What I mean is, the first act scene is laid in an hotel of sorts, at about three in the afternoon. What ought I to wear, do you think?"

I wasn't feeling fit for a discussion of gent's suitings.

"You'd better consult Jeeves," I said.

"A hot and by no means unripe idea! Where is he?"

"Gone back to the kitchen, I suppose."

"I'll smite the good old bell, shall I? Yes. No?"

"Right-o!"

Jeeves poured silently in.

"Oh, I say, Jeeves," began Cyril, "I just wanted to have a syllable or two with you. It's this way—— Halloa, who's this?"

I then perceived that the stout stripling had trickled into the room after Jeeves. He was standing near the door, looking at Cyril as if his worst fears had been realized. There was a bit of a silence. The child remained there, drinking Cyril in for about half a minute; then he gave his verdict:—

"Fish-face!"

"Eh? What?" said Cyril.

The child, who had evidently been taught at his mother's knee to speak the truth, made his meaning a trifle clearer.

"You've a face like a fish!"

He spoke as if Cyril was more to be pitied than censured, which I'm bound to say I thought rather decent and broad-minded of him. I don't mind admitting that, whenever I looked at Cyril's face, I always had a feeling that he couldn't have got that way without its being mostly his own fault. I found myself warming to this child. Absolutely, don't you know. I liked his conversation.

It seemed to take Cyril a moment or two really to grasp the thing, and then you could hear the blood of the Bassington-Bassingtons begin to sizzle.

"Well, I'm dashed!" he said. "I'm dashed if I'm not!"

"I wouldn't have a face like that," proceeded the child, with a good deal of earnestness, "not if you gave me a million dollars." He thought for a moment, then corrected himself. "Two million dollars!" he added.

Just what occurred then I couldn't exactly say, but the next few minutes were a bit exciting. I take it that Cyril must have made a dive for the infant. Anyway, the air seemed pretty well congested with arms and legs and things. Something bumped into the Wooster waistcoat just around the third button, and I

collapsed on to the settee and rather lost interest in things for the moment. When I had unscrambled myself, I found that Jeeves and the child had retired and Cyril was standing in the middle of the room snorting a bit.

"Who's that frightful little brute, Wooster?"

"I don't know. I never saw him before today."

"I gave him a couple of tolerably juicy buffets before he legged it. I say, Wooster, that kid said a dashed odd thing. He yelled out something about Jeeves promising him a dollar if he called me—er—what he said.'

It sounded pretty unlikely to me.

"What would Jeeves do that for?"

"It struck me as rummy, too."

"Where would be the sense of it?"

and last into the small hours, but more exciting because they wouldn't be timing the piece and consequently all the blighters who on these occasions let their angry passions rise would have plenty of scope for interruptions, with the result that a pleasant time would be had by all.

The thing was billed to start at eight o'clock, so I rolled up at ten-fifteen, so as not to have too long to wait before they began. The dress-parade was still going on. George was on the stage, talking to a cove in shirt-sleeves and an absolutely round chappie with big spectacles and a practically hairless dome. I had seen George with the latter merchant once or twice at the club, and I knew that he was Blumenfield, the manager. I waved to George, and slid into a seat at the back of the house, so as to be out

"THE CHILD REMAINED THERE, DRINKING CYRIL IN FOR ABOUT HALF A MINUTE; THEN HE GAVE HIS VERDICT: 'FISH-FACE!'"

"That's what I can't see."

"I mean to say, it's nothing to Jeeves what sort of a face you have!"

"No!" said Cyril. He spoke a little coldly, I fancied. I don't know why. "Well, I'll be popping. Toodle-oo!"

"Pip-pip!"

It must have been about a week after this rummy little episode that George Caffyn called me up and asked me if I would care to go and see a run-through of his show. "Ask Dad," it seemed, was to open out of town in Schenectady on the following Monday, and this was to be a sort of preliminary dress-rehearsal. A preliminary dress-rehearsal, old George explained, was the same as a regular dress-rehearsal inasmuch as it was apt to look like nothing on earth

of the way when the fighting started. Presently George hopped down off the stage and came and joined me, and fairly soon after that the curtain went down. The chappie at the piano whacked out a well-meant bar or two, and the curtain went up again.

I can't quite recall what the plot of "Ask Dad" was about, but I do know that it seemed able to jog along all right without much help from Cyril. I was rather puzzled at first. What I mean is, through brooding on Cyril and hearing him in his part and listening to his views on what ought and what ought not to be done, I suppose I had got a sort of impression rooted in the old bean that he was pretty well the backbone of the show, and that the rest of the company didn't do much except go on and fill in when he

happened to be off the stage. I sat there for nearly half an hour, waiting for him to make his entrance, until I suddenly discovered he had been on from the start. He was, in fact, the rummy-looking plug-ugly who was now leaning against a potted palm a couple of feet from the O.P. side, trying to appear intelligent while the heroine sang a song about Love being like something which for the moment has slipped my memory. After the second refrain he began to dance in company with a dozen other equally weird birds, the whole platoon giving rather the impression of a bevy of car-conductors from Akron, Ohio, dressed up in their Sunday clothes for a swift visit to the city. A painful spectacle for one who could see a vision of Aunt Agatha reaching for the hatchet and old Bassington-Bassington senior putting on his strongest pair of hob-nailed boots. Absolutely!

The dance had just finished, and Cyril and his pals had shuffled off into the wings when a voice spoke from the darkness on my right.

"Pop!"

Old Blumenfield clapped his hands, and the hero, who had just been about to get the next line off his diaphragm, cheesed it. I peered into the shadows. Who should it be but Jeeves's little playmate with the freckles! He was now strolling down the aisle with his hands in his pockets as if the place belonged to him. An air of respectful attention seemed to pervade the building.

"Pop," said the stripling, "that number's no good."

Old Blumenfield beamed over his shoulder.

"Don't you like it, darling?"

"It gives me a pain."

"You're dead right."

"You want something zippy there. Something with a bit of jazz to it!"

"Quite right, my boy. I'll make a note of it. All right. Go on!"

I turned to George, who was muttering to himself in rather an overwrought way.

"I say, George, old man, who the dickens is that kid?"

Old George groaned a bit hollowly, as if things were a trifle thick.

"I didn't know he had crawled in! It's Blumenfield's son. Now we're going to have a Hades of a time!"

"Does he always run things like this?"

"Always!"

"But why does old Blumenfield listen to him?"

"Nobody seems to know. It may be pure fatherly love, or he may regard him as a mascot. My own idea is that he thinks the kid has exactly the amount of intelligence of the average member of an audience, and that what makes a hit with him will please the general public. While, conversely, what he doesn't like will be too rotten for anyone. The kid is a pest, a wart, and a pot of poison, and should be strangled!"

The rehearsal went on. The hero got off his line. There was a slight outburst of frightfulness between the stage-manager and a Voice named Bill that came from somewhere near the roof, the subject under discussion being where the devil Bill's "ambers" were at that particular juncture. Then things went on again until the moment arrived for Cyril's big scene.

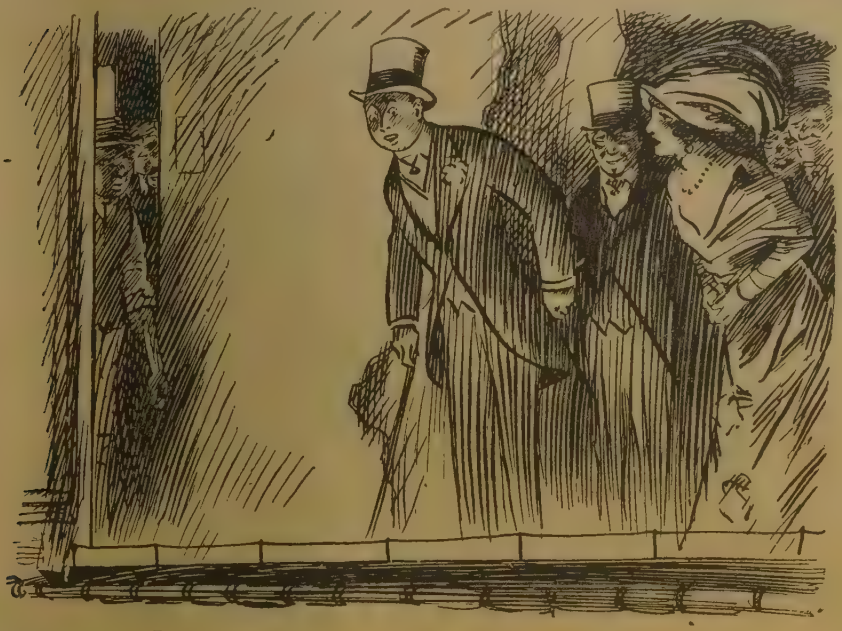
I was still a trifle hazy about the plot, but I had got on to the fact that Cyril was some sort of an English peer who had come over to America

"'YOU'RE FIRED!' BELLOWED OLD BLUMENFIELD, SWELLING A GOOD BIT MORE. 'GET OUT OF MY THEATRE!'"

doubtless for the best reasons. So far he had only had two lines to say. One was 'Oh, I say!' and the other was 'Yes, by Jove!': but I seemed to recollect, from hearing him his part, that pretty soon he was due rather to spread himself. I sat back in my seat and waited for him to bob up.

He bobbed up about five minutes later.

Things had got a bit stormy by that time. The Voice and the stage-director had had another of their love-feasts—this time something to do with why Bill's "blues" weren't on the job or something. And, almost as soon as that was over, there was a bit of unpleasantness because a flower-pot fell off a window-ledge and nearly brained the hero. The atmosphere was consequently more or less hotted up when Cyril, who had been hanging about at the back of the stage with a squad of his Akron inseparables,



breezed down centre and toed the mark for his most substantial chunk of entertainment. The heroine had been saying something—I forget what: something about Love being something or not being something, if you follow me—and all the car-conductors, with Cyril at their head, had begun to surge round her in the restless sort of way those chappies always do when there's a number coming along.

Cyril's first line was, "Oh, I say, you know, you mustn't say that, really!" and it seemed to me he passed it over the larynx with a goodish deal of vim and *je-ne-sais-quoi*. But, by Jove, before the heroine had time for the come-back, our little friend with the freckles had risen to lodge a protest.

"Pop!"

"Yes, darling?"

"That one's no good!"

"Which one, darling?"

"The one with a face like a fish."

"But they all have faces like fish, darling."

The child seemed to see the justice of this objection. He became more definite.

"The ugly one."

"Which ugly one? That one?" said old Blumenfield, pointing to Cyril.

"Yep! He's rotten!"

"I thought so myself."

"He's a pill!"

"You're dead right, my boy. I've noticed it for some time."

Cyril had been gaping a bit while these few remarks were in progress. He now shot down to the footlights. Even from where I was sitting, I could see that these harsh words had hit the old Bassington-Bassington family pride a frightful wallop. He started to get pink in the ears, and then in the nose, and then in the cheeks, till in about a quarter of a minute he looked pretty much like an explosion in a tomato cannery on a sunset evening.

"What the deuce do you mean?"

"What the deuce do *you* mean?" shouted old Blumenfield. "Don't yell at me across the footlights!"

"I've a dashed good mind to come down and spank that little brute!"

"What!"

"A dashed good mind!"

Old Blumenfield swelled like a pumped-up tyre. He got rounder than ever.

"See here, Mister—I don't know your darn name——!"

"My name's Bassington-Bassington, and the jolly old Bassington-Bassingtons—I mean the Bassington-Bassingtons aren't accustomed——"

Old Blumenfield told him in a few brief words pretty much what he thought of the Bassington-Bassingtons and what they weren't accustomed to. The whole strength of the company rallied round to enjoy his remarks. You could see them jutting out from the wings and protruding from behind trees.

"You got to work good for my pop!" said the stout child, waggling his head reprovingly at Cyril.

"I don't want any bally cheek from you!" said Cyril, gurgling a bit.

"What's that?" barked old Blumenfield. "Do you understand that this boy is my son?"

"Yes, I do," said Cyril. "And you both have my sympathy!"

"You're fired!" bellowed old Blumenfield, swelling a good bit more. "Get out of my theatre!"

About half-past ten next morning, just after I had finished lubricating the good old interior

with a soothing cup of Oolong, Jeeves filtered into my bedroom, and said that Cyril was waiting to see me in the sitting-room.

"How does he look, Jeeves?"

"Sir?"

"What does Mr. Bassington-Bassington look like?"

"It is hardly my place, sir, to criticize the facial peculiarities of your friends."

"I don't mean that. I mean, does he appear peeved and what not?"

"Not noticeably, sir. His manner is tranquil."

"That's rum!"

"Sir?"

"Nothing. Show him in, will you?"

I'm bound to say I had expected to see Cyril showing a few more traces of last night's battle. I was looking for a bit of the overwrought soul and the quivering ganglions, if you know what I mean. He seemed pretty ordinary and quite fairly cheerful.

"Halloa, Wooster, old thing!"

"Cheero!"

"I just looked in to say good-bye."

"Good-bye?"

"Yes. I'm off to Washington in an hour." He sat down on the bed. "You know, Wooster, old top," he went on, "I've been thinking it all over, and really it doesn't seem quite fair to the jolly old guv'nor, my going on the stage and so forth. What do you think?"

"I see what you mean."

"I mean to say, he sent me over here to broaden my jolly old mind and words to that effect, don't you know, and I can't help thinking it would be a bit of a jar for the old boy if I gave him the bird and went on the stage instead. I don't know if you understand me, but what I mean to say is, it's a sort of question of conscience."

"Can you leave the show without upsetting everything?"

"Oh, that's all right. I've explained everything to old Blumenfield, and he quite sees my position. Of course, he's sorry to lose me—said he didn't see how he could fill my place and all that sort of thing—but, after all, even if it does land him in a bit of a hole, I think I'm right in resigning my part, don't you?"

"Oh, absolutely."

"I thought you'd agree with me. Well, I ought to be shifting. Awfully glad to have seen something of you, and all that sort of rot. Pip-pip!"

"Toodle-oo!"

He sallied forth, having told all those bally lies with the clear, blue, pop-eyed gaze of a young child. I rang for Jeeves. You know, ever since last night I had been exercising the old bean to some extent, and a good deal of light had dawned upon me.

"Jeeves?"

"Sir?"

"Did you put that pie-faced infant up to ballyragging Mr. Bassington-Bassington?"

"Sir?"

"Oh, you know what I mean. Did you tell him to get Mr. Bassington-Bassington sacked from the 'Ask Dad' company?"

"I would not take such a liberty, sir." He started to put out my clothes. "It is possible that young Master Blumenfield may have gathered from casual remarks of mine that I did not consider the stage altogether a suitable sphere for Mr. Bassington-Bassington."

"I say, Jeeves, you know, you're a bit of a marvel. A chappie can generally rely on you, don't you know. Absolutely!"

"I endeavour to give satisfaction, sir."

"And I'm frightfully obliged, if you know what I mean. Aunt Agatha would have had sixteen or seventeen fits if you hadn't headed him off."

"I fancy there might have been some little friction and unpleasantness, sir. I am laying out the blue suit with the thin red stripe, sir. I fancy the effect will be pleasing."

It's a rummy thing, but I had finished breakfast and gone out and got as far as the elevator before I remembered what it was that I had meant to do to reward Jeeves for his really sporting behaviour in this matter of the chump Cyril. My heart warmed to the chappie. Absolutely. It cut me to the heart to do it, but I had decided to give him his way and let those purple socks pass out of my life. After all, there are times when a cove must make sacrifices. I was just going to nip back and break the glad news to him, when the elevator came up, so I thought I would leave it till I got home.

The coloured chappie in charge of the elevator looked at me, as I hopped in, with a good deal of quiet devotion and what not.

"I wish to thank yo', suh," he said, "for yo' kindness."

"Eh? What?"

"Misto' Jeeves done give me them purple socks, as you told him. Thank yo' very much, suh!"

I looked down. The blighter was a blaze of mauve from the ankle-bone southward. I don't know when I've seen anything so dressy.

"Oh, 'ah! Not at all! Right-o! Glad you like them!" I said.

Well, I mean to say, what? Absolutely!

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

418.—THE ALIEN BOMB-DODGERS.

A GROUP of aliens, inspired by a great fear of air raids, sought a refuge some little way out of London. They found a curiously-built square house. All the living rooms were on the ground floor, and all the sleeping apartments (I had almost written "dying rooms") were on the three upper floors, approached by a well staircase in the centre, as shown in the illustration. It will be seen that there were eight rooms on every floor. The owner consented to let the house on condition that every bedroom was occupied, that not more than three persons should sleep in any room, and that the same number should sleep on each of the three floors. Then, thinking this was too easy (for he was disposed to put the applicants off), he added, "And I insist that nineteen persons shall sleep on each of the four sides of the house." To his sur-

prise these conditions were accepted, and when the company arrived they were correctly accommodated. A few weeks later nine more of their friends arrived and these were put up, again without breaking the conditions. Now, how many persons were there before and after the nine arrived? And how might they have been placed in the rooms? This is an extension, from two floors to three, of an old puzzle of mine, and will, I think, be found interesting.

419.—WORD CHAINS.

HERE is a quite new form of word puzzle. You take a word of four letters, then add two letters so that the last four spell a new word, then add two more letters so that the final four again spell a word, and so on until you reach a given final word. If, for example, you have to change WEST to EAST, you might proceed as follows: WESTAREAST, where the chain of words is WEST, STAR, AREA, EAST. Now try in the same way to change ARMY into NAVY. All the words must be English dictionary ones, and proper names are not allowed, such as Anna and Mary. The chain should be as short as possible.

420.—THE FOUR FOURS.

I AM perpetually receiving inquiries about this old puzzle. I published it in 1899, but have since found that it first appeared in the first volume of *Knowledge* (1881). It has since been dealt with at some length by various writers. The point is to express all possible whole numbers with four fours (no more and no fewer), using the various arithmetical signs. Thus $4 \times 4 + \frac{4}{4}$ equals 17, and $44 + 4 + \sqrt{4}$ equals 50. All numbers up to 100 inclusive may be solved, using only the signs for addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square root, decimal points, and the factorial sign $\lfloor\!\underline{4}$, which means $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4$, or 24. I will leave the reader to try his skill on 89. There are three different solutions for this number. Can you find one?

421.—FIND THE WORD.

THERE is a monosyllable which, if you add to it a single letter, becomes a word of three syllables. Readers of this page will not have far to seek.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

413.—THE SIAMESE SERPENT.

THE drawing cannot be executed under the conditions in fewer than thirteen lines. We have therefore to find the longest of these thirteen lines. In the

illustration we start at A and end at B, or the reverse. The dotted lines represent the lines omitted. It requires a little thought. Thus, the unbroken line from D to C is longer than the dotted line, therefore we take the former. Again, we can get in a little more of the drawing by taking the tongue rather than the mouth, but the part of the tongue that ends in a straight line has to be omitted.

414.—GIDSBY'S GEESE.

JABEZ took 101 geese to market. He sold Brown 51 (half the flock and half a goose over), sold Woods 17 (a third of the 50 and a third of a goose over), sold Widow Winter 9 (or a quarter of 33 and three-quarters of a goose over), and sold Tompkins 5 (one-fifth of 24 and one-fifth of a goose over). This left him exactly 19 in hand, and he had not divided a goose. The easiest way of solving the puzzle is to work backwards from the 19.

415.—THE TRAVELLER'S PUZZLE.

THE name of the book is "ROBINSON CRUSOE." Start at the upper R and pass to the letters in this order: R in Sunburn, O and B in Ablution, I and N in Diamonds, first S and O in Obverses, N and C in Neologic, R and U in Upholder, S and second O in Solution, and E and the lower star in Puzzler. All the letters have been struck out once and once only in the fewest possible straight lines, and the letters at the turnings spell the name of the book.

416.—A CHARADE.

LIVING—STONE.

417.—AN ENIGMA.

A BALLOON.

The Pig and Poultry Problem.

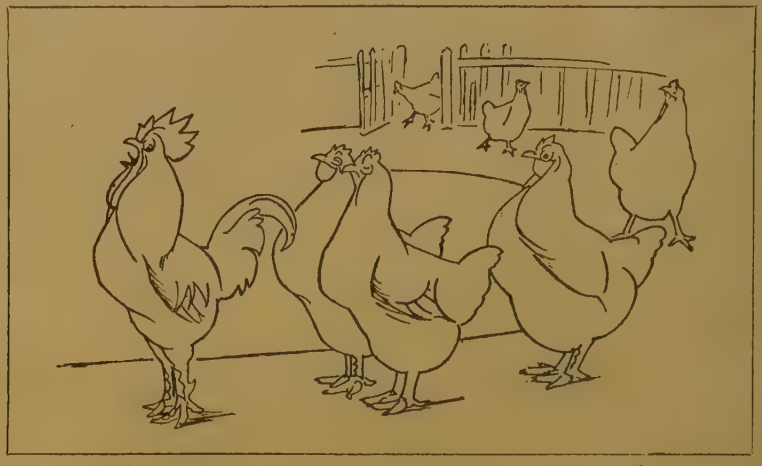
By LEONARD LARKIN.

Illustrated by J. A. Shepherd.

I SHALL persevere like a Briton as long as this war lasts, but, as the convict says in the story, it's hard to understand the authorities. I am living in the country, but till this war came to shake me up (and some others) I was living there rather like a visiting townsman. I had not naturalized myself, so to speak, by the acquisition of pig, cow, and poultry interests. I still shirk the cow, but as to pigs and poultry I have done my best to be effective and enthusiastic since the war began, and am still struggling along in the wake of the agile authorities, doing my best to keep up in their bewildering steeplechase over a stiff country of regulations, permits, prohibitions, warnings, encouragements, discouragements, threats, promises, advice, penalties, taxes, charges, directions, misdirections, orders, and disorders.

In 1914 I began to keep pigs. I knew nothing about the business then, and all I have learnt since had very little to do with the pigs themselves. It is contained in newspapers, orders, biscuit-coloured forms, and—especially—bills for pig-food and pig-lodgings. I was attracted by more than one glowing newspaper article wherein the common pig was described as a sort of bundle of magic whereby every sort of rubbish was transmuted into wealth immeasurable—an alchemist in himself, a pilosopher's stone, a coiner of genuine sovereigns from spurious refuse. Garbage built up the pig, it seemed, the pig became bacon, and bacon was wealth. So I bought pigs.

Or rather, I sent Potter to buy them. Potter is my gardener, and knows everything about everything in gardens and farms and piggeries and hen-coops and barns and cowsheds and such places; so I judge, at any rate, by his elderly advice on these matters and everything else. Potter bought the pigs of Prodgers, a small farmer close by, who knows even more than Potter, and also advises me, in the intervals of Potter. The pigs came rather dear, I thought, but Potter and Prodgers unanimously assured me that any real judge of pigs would count it a great piece of luck to get such pigs at such a ridiculous price, which nothing but a fortunate series of coincidences in local pig-politics made possible. So no doubt I was mistaken. Pigsties also I bought, again through the invaluable medium of Prodgers *viâ* Potter. They came in unidentifiable though obviously second-hand fractions, and were jig-sawed together by Potter with great assiduity while the garden beds got weedy and the lettuces "bolted" to seed. But war was beginning, and I felt pleased with my pig-project, which yielded a certain snug sense of provisioning the garrison against the enemy.



"I BECAME A PROPRIETOR OF BUFF ORPINGTONS."

Speaking of provisioning, by the way, I soon discovered that pig-food was not all garbage. There was meal and swedes and mangels and

other things; Potter got them through the invaluable Prodgers, who, it seemed, was far better situated than such a mere outsider as myself for getting this kind of thing of the proper sort, at the proper price. On the whole, the proper price seemed to be rather high.

Pigs without poultry, however, left my establishment out of balance, Potter assured me; it had a lopsided effect that no country gentleman should tolerate. Moreover, such was the fortune of war that Prodgers was possessed of a particularly choice strain of Buff Orpingtons, some of which, by the judicious diplomacy of Potter, he might be induced to part with at a price perhaps not quite so absurdly low as that of the pigs, but, at any rate, a bargain. So I became a proprietor of Buff Orpingtons.

When they arrived I learned from Potter that, always observant in my interests, his visit to Prodgers's had revealed the presence of Leghorns and White Wyandottes. And just as poultry was required to balance pigs, so Leghorns and White Wyandottes in any well-conducted poultry yard were necessary to balance Buff Orpingtons, as was obvious to the meanest intelligence (mine).

With my Leghorns, Wyandottes, Orpingtons, and pigs about me, I felt the country was no longer in danger. And soon my stock was reinforced—by rats and sparrows. I was surrounded by life and bustle, and mightily exhilarated to observe how many happy, hungry creatures were depending on me for their living, in addition to Potter. The price of poultry-food—also of pig-food (both doing equally well for rats and sparrows)—mounted surprisingly, and if it had not been for the subtle advantages of buying it all through Prodgers I might have grown discouraged.

But I didn't really begin to think about discouragement till I read an article in a newspaper by a "food expert." I had never heard the gentleman's name before, and in fact could not remember having previously heard of any other food expert. But this gentleman was so very certain about everything that he must have been right. Moreover, he talked about calories, which is always convincing to anybody who couldn't tell a calory from a proteid if he met it in the street. This gentleman showed quite clearly that poultry was a deadly snare, and the most effective device yet invented for abolishing corn and giving nothing in exchange.

Now I had been having something in exchange—a few eggs. Fewer than I expected, certainly; in fact, sometimes fewer than I had actually counted in the nests. But Potter explained that I had probably been counting in the china specimens planted as models for the hens to work by, and anyhow there is nothing quite so confusing to count as eggs, because of the family likeness.

"A NEW PLATOON OF COCKS AND HENS MARCHED IN, TRIUMPHANT AND ASSERTIVE."

But the food expert would hear nothing of eggs. Any number of eggs would never pay for the corn. In fact, he hinted that eggs were the ruin of Europe, and the more we had the worse off we should be. Other food experts joined in, and the great poultry danger overshadowed the country. Soon we heard ominous hints of Government interference. Cocks and hens were condemned to death in all the newspapers. Everybody should eat nothing but poultry for a month, was one suggestion; but that was quite reasonable by comparison with others. At any rate, poultry was to be got rid of somehow, and all poultry-food was to be cut off. Anybody keeping a hen was a traitor, an ally of the Boche, a by-word, and a reproach.

I consulted Potter. He consulted Prodgers. Prodgers consulted my interests entirely. Rather than I should be stigmatized an enemy of my struggling country, Prodgers would take the odium on himself. He would take the fowls off my hands; and he took them, at a reduction on the original price commensurate with the horrible prospect before the guilty owner of those fowls.

I breathed again, for a little while. Then another food expert, far more expert than the first, and not able merely to talk of calories, but equal to explaining the metabolism of nitrogenous hydrocarbons as related to the intercostal ingurgitation of something or other, wrote a longer article in a larger newspaper which utterly

abolished the previous expert, and proved beyond dispute that poultry-farmers were the only remaining guarantee against national starvation. It was beyond his comprehension, he said, how his otherwise sane countrymen could be induced to listen to such unscientific flapdoodle as was offered in the guise of authoritative advice on matters of egg-production. And, in another part of the same newspaper, I observed that a sub-deputy-assistant supernumerary controller of a new Government office, in course of an interview, indignantly repudiated the unfounded rumour that it was the intention of the Government to discourage poultry-keeping, and urged, on the contrary, that anybody who had a bird-cage or a window-box which could be covered with wire should keep at least one hen as a matter of patriotic duty. Pigs, now, there might be some doubt about, but as to poultry——

This was authoritative, and though I felt momentarily uneasy about the pigs, I saw that there must be no hesitation about poultry. Prodgers's inability to return my fowls grieved him sadly, but it seemed that his responsibility had so overwhelmed him that he had got rid of them at a sacrifice; but he was ready to use his influence to get some more, though just now prices, under the stimulus of the sub-deputy-assistant supernumerary's statement, were perfectly shocking.

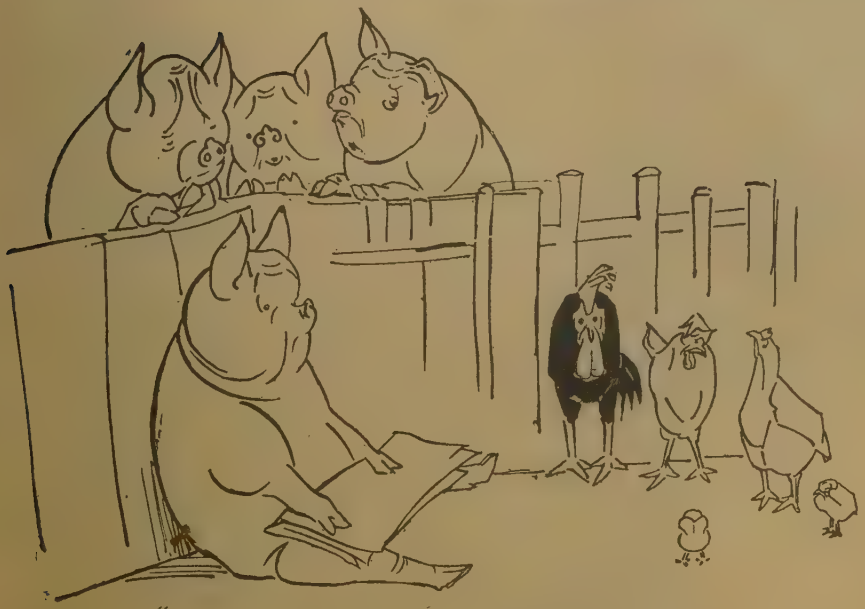
So a new platoon of cocks and hens marched in, triumphant and assertive, Potter bringing up the rear with the bill.

But the official hint about pigs was no false alarm. Very soon came a thunderous announcement from a very great official, who was sub-deputy to nobody and with nothing supernumerary about him. Pigs must be slaughtered. That was peremptory and final. Pigs were eating grain and meal; pigs were the ruin of the country. Death to the pig. All meat but pork should be prohibited till the pig was extinct, demanded people writing letters to the papers. Pigs were eating what would more economically feed fowls; pigs must go.

Death by the knife is the fate of all pigs, but mine were so very young and innocent and pink that I felt shocked, and hesitated even when Potter mentioned that Prodgers had influential connections in the pork-butchery interest, whereby all the load of worry could be removed from my shoulders. And while I hesitated, the very great official came out with an indignant repudiation of the remarks, which, he said, were attributed to him by an incompetent reporter. What he really said was that both pigs and poultry should be kept, but fed on nothing but waste from the kitchen; every other sort of food was to be strictly prohibited, but waste from the kitchen would keep all the pigs and poultry going prosperously, he assured us, and so provide a vast store of valuable and nutritious food which would avert all risk of—etc., etc., etc.

"VERY SOON CAME A THUNDEROUS ANNOUNCEMENT FROM A VERY GREAT OFFICIAL. PIGS MUST BE SLAUGHTERED."

Before the last echoes of this official pronunciamento died away, there came a louder proclamation than any. There must be no more kitchen waste. Valuable food was being thrown away daily by careless waste in the kitchen; excellent and nutritious provender which would keep thousands of families for hundreds of weeks was being thrown to the pigs and poultry every day. Drastic penalties would be imposed for this form of crime, and a new corps of inspectors formed, with notebooks, rubbish hooks, and salaries complete, to rake all dustbins endwise



"EVEN THE PIGS BEGAN TO WEAR A PUZZLED LOOK."

and sue for heavy penalties on every potato peeling discovered.

Even the pigs began to wear a puzzled look after this, and the poultry went about with heads permanently and thoughtfully cocked aside, waiting for an exp anation. It was some time before it came, and then it appeared by way of answer to a deputation. Cocks should be got rid of, it seemed, a.so unprofitable hens; but once this blend of domestic breavement and invidious distinction was accomplished you might keep all other poultry as wel as pigs, providing you didn't feed them. That was the one and only condition—they must not be fed. This was made clear by the list of things they mustn't have, comprising everything edible.

But obviously there were difficulties here. People attempting to keep any sort of animals without feeding them are liable to quarrel with a certain energetic society. Deep thinkers got to work, and soon their decision was announced. 'All but twenty per cent. of the poultry in the country must be killed off at once.

"COCKS SHOULD BE GOT RID OF, IT SEEMED, ALSO UNPROFITABLE HENS."

Dull persons affected not to see clearly how this process was to provide food for the surviving twenty per cent., and the pigs. Also mathematical puzzles were provided; as, for instance, what is twenty per cent. of a full brood of thirteen chicks?

But before the problem could be fairly tackled, or the anxious hens bereaved of their families, it was announced with indignation that the twenty per cent. expedient was unauthorized, unofficial, unpractical, unheard-of, unthinkable, unprecedented, uncalled-for, hunky doodle. The true, correct, authorized, and official scheme was that all sorts of corn might be used to feed fowls, also pigs, providing it was of no use for anything else. Damaged corn—that is to say, corn so far damaged as not to be fit for milling. This was good news, and I instantly dispatched Potter to buy damaged corn. But damaged corn, it appeared, was also wanted by everybody else, and there was precious little of it. The price of such damaged corn as existed was soaring wildly in response to the sudden demand.

Still, there was always Prodgers. Such was Prodgers's devotion to my interests that he would see that I got my damaged corn, if he had to damage it specially for me. Moreover, a paternal Government had seen to it that Prodgers should not suffer by his devotion, for it had fixed a price for sound, millable wheat, above which price not a pint must be sold. But there was no fixed price for damaged corn, which, therefore, under the competition of poultry-keepers, rose to a proud eminence of about a guinea a quarter dearer than the best corn; with the happy result that Prodgers was rewarded handsomely for his devotion; and certainly poultry will never starve while the damage of corn for their benefit is so effectually encouraged.

But everybody hadn't a Prodgers to fall back on; and for the general benefit it has been announced that hen rations must be cut down to one ounce per hen per day. Do you remember the ancient fable of the hen who found a heap of jewels? The wise old cock who assured her that all the jewels in the world were not worth one barley-corn was probably treated with such wifely scorn as might be expected. He has had to wait two thousand years, but he is vindicated at last. The scrambling habits of hens at feeding time would seem to make them unlikely practitioners of the queue habit; but if every hen is to get her ounce to that they must come. Though she won't get it then, if the rats are to have their part. And they will, unless it occurs to most of us to give up keeping rats—and sparrows—in war-time. Potter is seriously concerned about the rats. He is wondering if he can persuade Prodgers to sell me a dog to keep them down. No doubt he will get sadly troubled about sparrows as soon as Prodgers has a sparrowing cat for sale. But there! More regulations are coming, no doubt ushering in a long vista of transactions between Potter and Prodgers.

"THE WISE OLD COCK ASSURED HER THAT ALL THE JEWELS IN THE WORLD WERE NOT WORTH ONE BARLEY-CORN."

IN THE DARK

By

R. S. WARREN BELL.

Illustrated by

Percy F. S. Spence.

I.

THE fast train to Minxhampton came to a sudden stop at a mere wayside station. Simultaneously all lights were turned out, and the guard, walking down the platform, was purring: "Keep your seats. You are all to keep your seats!"

The sudden arrest of the train in its rapid flight, the equally sudden extinguishing even of the feeble glimmer of gas ordinarily permitted, and this very unusual command, "You are all to keep your seats!"—for one did not travel express to alight at this particular "Nowhere in Anywhere" of a station—dispatched an electric thrill down the train. The card-player paused, ace uplifted, in the act of inflicting disaster on an opponent; the grave greybeard came out of his half-doze; the girl-typist lifted her chin from her novel and was in a moment a listening, peering cat again; the unfit or exempted Knut, with more voice than heart, muttered nervously: "What the dev——" It became a train obsessed by one thought:—

"*Zepps!*"

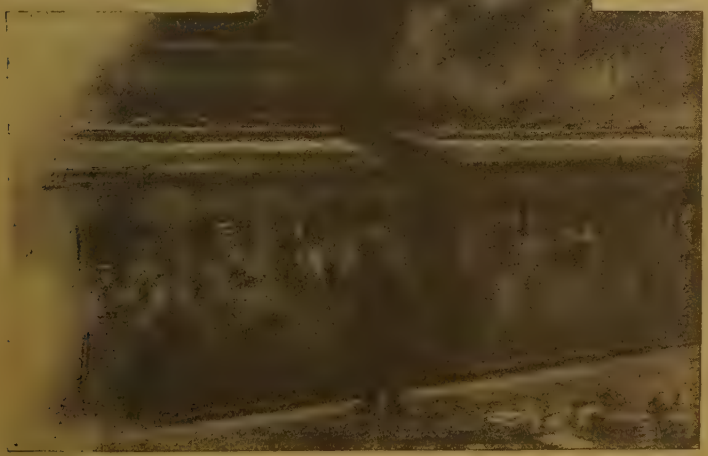
There is no ceremony of introduction so potent as danger. People, men and women claiming one common origin, and therefore, in a sense, brothers and sisters, who had been gazing stonily at each other through the twilight of their respective compartments, started chatting like old friends.

"What does it mean—somewhere in the locality?"

"They don't stop the trains unless they're close up."

"We were held up like this for four hours last week."

"Are you mad, sir? Blow that match out!" And the speaker, jangled nerves in his voice, deliberately leaned forward and blew out the match before the inconsiderate



"A MAN IN A FIRST-CLASS 'SMOKER' LEANED OUT. 'ARE THEY ABOUT, GUARD?'"

puppy of a clerk could convey it to his cigarette.

"Quite right! What are you thinking of!" And five pairs of eyes glared at the squashed youth.

And the guard, coming back, was still purring: "Keep your seats, please. You are to keep your seats."

"Or keep *under* the seats, please," added the clerk, recovering himself with Cockney readiness.

A man in a first-class "smoker" leaned out.

"Are they about, guard?"

The official put his hand to his mouth: "As near overhead as may be, sir," he replied in a subdued tone. And he passed on, still purring.

The eight affluent, well-dressed men in the "first smoker" sat in silence, maintaining a stolid indifference to the thrill that had set the "thirds" chattering. The cigar of a stout, heavily-coated gentleman glowed a little redder. But for this slight acknowledgment of the impending danger, the "first smoker" remained imperturbable.

But presently an officer, sitting in a corner on the platform side facing the engine, broke the silence.

"I think," he murmured, "I'll go and investigate."

And, turning the handle of the door, he slipped out into the gloom of the platform.

A young man, he breathed more freely when he found himself in the open. To one just home after months at the Front, there was a galling impotency about sitting cooped up in a railway compartment while Zeppelins hovered overhead. Besides, he was curious, this being his first experience of an airship raid.

It was, of course, a moonless night, yet clear and mild, with occasional patches of cloud offering cover to the raiders as they careered through the starlit firmament. Only here and there a lamp at quarter-cock broke the darkness of the little station. The soldier, barking his shins against a porter's barrow, swore softly. Proceeding then more cautiously, he moved across the platform in the direction of what looked like a white gate. Beyond, there might be a village possessing, at a convenient distance, an eminence from which one could obtain a good view of the proceedings. He found the gate locked and sauntered on, passing from the illuminated area, such as it was, to a remote stretch which, he surmised, led to a crossing by which one gained the opposite side of the station, where, from the booking-hall, and possibly from the station-master, he might be able to glean information as to the enemy's manœuvres. Very imperfectly he could see ahead the outlines of a bridge forming a viaduct over the line, and it was probably because his eyes were cast upwards that he did not discern a person approaching him. There was a collision. It was nothing to the soldier, hardened to the rough-and-tumble of warfare; but to the lady of sheltered life, and unused to the hard knocks of the camp, he feared it had proved otherwise. For he felt instinctively that it was a lady. The texture of her clothes, her height—her face was almost on a level with his own—the quality of the "Oh!" that escaped her—all had their tale for a man whose senses had been quickened to a keen edge by the thousand incidents of war. But, in any case, she was a woman.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "Really, I had no idea——"

"Oh, don't mention it."

"I hope I didn't hurt you?"

"Not in the least." She gave a little laugh that, nevertheless, as he noted, possessed a nervous undercurrent. "And, if you had, I am afraid I should have deserved it, as I oughtn't to have got out."

"Nor should I, perhaps. But I was going to find out what I could."

Then, as a silence fell upon them, there came through the night air a dull, plugging *boom*. She uttered another involuntary "Oh!" and after a pause asked, with a voice which, in the circumstances, she commanded very well, "Was that a gun?"

"Yes," he said, although he knew it wasn't. "They are not very near yet, though. A dozen or more miles away, perhaps."

There was the least tremor in the laugh accompanying her retort: "I should call that *very* near."

But he was not thinking of the sound. She was so close to him that he felt her breath upon his face. She was a tall girl—an English girl. Though a truth-discovering light might reveal her to be plain, perhaps appallingly plain, this intimate proximity of a tall, nice girl—for she spoke nicely—had its interests for him. For the moment, then, he had quite forgotten that sound, distant, as his professional ear told him, a very considerable way from the mute, lightless train, their common vehicle, which stood in the roadside station like a small thing of the air taking cover from hawk or kestrel.

"Probably only among somebody's turnips," he said, reassuringly, and a little thoughtlessly.

"Then it was a bomb?" she asked, quickly.

"I think so—there is a difference in the sound."

"You said a gun first. I suppose you didn't wish to fr-frighten me."

"It might still be," he answered. "There—that *is* a gun—several of 'em," he added, as a ripple of detonations reached them.

"Oh, dear!" she said, frankly alarmed. "I hope *we* sha'n't be the next—turnips."

It is a way of the English to turn their fears into jokes, and it is a good way.

"They have not come *after* turnips," he said, "you may be sure. Still, there is nothing like taking care of one's skin. How about that hefty-looking bridge? What do you say?—apologizing for the liberty."

"I'll do what you think best," she said, simply.

"Then, if you don't mind taking my arm——"

She did not hesitate, but put her fingers on his arm, and they moved down the platform to where it sloped to the line. A few yards,

carefully negotiated, brought them beneath the towering archway.

"There's generally," he said, feeling the brickwork with his disengaged hand, "—yes, here it is. Might have been made for us. A manhole. Be careful."

He put both of his hands lightly about her and drove her before him. "Snug, isn't it? And private!"

"It is peculiarly private!" she said. "And it's very clever of you to have thought of it!"

She stood in the manhole, he just outside of it. The darkness enwrapped them as with a mantle. He did not know whether she was pretty or plain, she did not know whether he was villain or gentleman—for villains are often the better gentlemen in speech and manner. So they stood, she in the hole, he just outside of it, sharing a common peril.

"I'm afraid," he said, "I'm taking a frightful liberty in dragging you along here, but it struck me as the best place."

He caught a gleam of white teeth.

"One doesn't think of 'liberties' during an air raid. To tell you the truth, I'm awfully scared, and you're so cool——"

"Of course you are," he cut in. "It's all part of their idea. But it won't shorten the war by an hour," he added, grimly. "On the contrary, indeed. You know what Kitchener said when we were experiencing a great shortage of men? 'Tell them to send their Zeppelins.'"

"Just like him," she breathed. "That man never spoke but he said something!"

"Good. An epitaph in an epigram. Do you remember—— ?"

"*Listen!*" Her hand shot out and seized his sleeve.

He heard it—a curious hum. As yet it was distant. Except, in fact, for her sharp ears, he would not have noticed it. It was not louder at one moment than another, like the propeller-whine of an aeroplane. It preserved an even sound, a deadly, menacing continuity. As the sustained hum came nearer, in spite of all his battle experience he felt the blood creep coldly under his hair. For there was something uncanny in this hum descending from the stars; something devilish in this passage of an evil engine-of-war over the still countryside.

Involuntarily she had put her hand on his arm. It reminded him that he was a man, her temporary protector. The hum had now developed into a roar as the four engines, beating their way through the empyrean, brought their ship nearer. He felt her fingers twitch.

"It won't take any notice of little us," he said, reassuringly. "Think I'll step out and have a squint at it."

He moved a few yards out of the arch and stared upwards in the direction from which the sound seemed to proceed. At first he saw nothing but stars, with an occasional fleck of cloud.

"There it is," said her voice, at his shoulder. "Look at the Milky Way. D'you see it? Every now and then it seems to put a star out."

In his absorption he had not noticed her steal out after him.

"Oh, yes. You've got sharp eyes!" The Zepp looked hardly bigger than a pencil at the great height it had attained. "Well, it can't see much of *us*, that's one comfort."

Motionless and lightless stood the arrested train. The little station seemed to bow her head in preparation for the impending blow. It seemed astonishing that that tiny distant thing could make such a noise. Yet there was a certain arrogance in the very altitude the airship had sought. "The air is mine," she seemed to say, "and I will go where I will."

"She's right overhead," ejaculated the man. "You'd better go back."

"It's too fascinating," the girl murmured, staring upwards.

"This," said the man, abruptly, almost savagely, "is how people are killed! Come under the bridge—you'd better. It's bang overhead."

They stole through the dark to the manhole.

"Thousands of people are in the open watching her," he muttered. "All asking for trouble. Get right in," he urged her.

"*Hush!*" she said, and then laughed nervously at the absurdity of the word. But for the moment one almost felt that the Thing could hear you.

Her French-heeled shoe knocked against something. She bent down.

"How thoughtful of somebody! A nice pile of bricks to sit on."

"You may be glad of them soon."

They left off speaking to listen. The monster was roaring over them. For some minutes there was no diminution in the sound, then it grew fainter.

"Given us a miss," he said, in a relieved tone, "though I shouldn't wonder if she's spotted the line by the signal lights."

"Do you think they'll let the train go on now? I'm cold." She shivered. "Cold and hungry."

"I'll just wander along and find out," he said. "I don't think it's at all likely we shall go on yet, though."

As he passed out from under the bridge she sank down on the little heap of bricks. She was trembling. Her life was such a smooth affair, and this was such an untoward occurrence. Yet, though she was trembling, now that the Zepp had passed she experienced a sensation of enjoyableness. And it was all—when you came to think of it—so extremely improper, this "chumming up" with a man she couldn't even see. She felt she ought to go back to her seat in the train, yet she only laughed softly as she cuddled her skirts about her and sat, obediently awaiting his return, with her elbows on her knees and her chin in her palms. Whatever he was, he had a nice voice and a curious little "ordering" way that she liked.

After what seemed a desperately long time she heard him approaching.

"Not an earthly yet," he said, cheerfully.

"'I WAS JUST GOING TO BEG YOUR PERMISSION——' HE WAS SAYING, WHEN OUT OF THE BLACK DISTANCE A HOARSE TONE SPOKE: 'PUT THAT MATCH OUT THERE—SHE'S COMING BACK!'"

"The guard won't hear of it." She felt rather than saw him standing in front of her. "I got my coat. You'd better have it. Quite easy to get a chill hanging about like this."

"But won't you want it?"

"I'm all right, thanks."

"It's awfully good of you."

"Not at all."

She stood up, and with some fumbling the overcoat was adjusted about her shoulders.

"It's splendidly warm," she said. "You soldiers do look after yourselves!"

And she nestled into the manhole again.

"That's the outer woman," said he. "After politely addressing what I took to be the station-master, I found it to be an automatic machine, and here's some chocolate."

She laughed merrily. "You are thoughfulness itself!"

Breaking into one of the packets, she nibbled the spidery wafer of chocolate that is all these mechanical thieves of shopkeepers give you for your penny.

"Won't you smoke?" she asked.

"I was just going to beg your permission——" he was saying, when out of the black distance a hoarse tone spoke:—

"Put that match out there—she's coming back!"

Coming back! The toothsome morsel lost its savour, and the girl sat up rigidly, her ears alert for that ominous humming.

And in the motionless train two hundred apprehensive souls were likewise painfully engaged. They sat there, with nothing but a train's fragile roof over them, listening. And borne on the light breeze came the devil engine-beat again.

"Do you think—she thinks—we're somebody?" the girl asked.

"She's nosing about for something—that's clear," he answered.

The giant top hummed nearer and nearer. Ah, yes! What good to deny that it frightened these train-farers, peaceful non-combatants? But it is one thing to be frightened, another to be frightened out of a purpose you have set and fixed and unfrightenable by any frightfulness.

"Perhaps she found the lights a little trying," he was saying, when a muffled roar smote the air, and the ground trembled. Twice and thrice came the thunderous reverberations of bombs meeting the earth. And now a new voice joined in, as a battery, its proximity entirely unsuspected by the travellers, set up a lively cannonade. *Swish* through the still air rushed its shells, to break against the stars. *Bang, boom!* The game little guns were letting off the venom they had contained with patience for many weary

nights. As for the airship, she made madly for a friendly cloud, and, having peered round it this way and then that, and seeing many long fingers of light reaching for her, she dodged to another cloud, and thence got away like a hare flying for cover.

II.

THE guard was again purring down the train.

"Keep your seats, please. You are all to keep your seats."

But the penned-up passengers had had enough of this sardine-like existence, and they streamed out on to the platform, deprecating officials notwithstanding.

"We seem to be here for some time," said the soldier. "The lioness is not generally far away from the lion, and that chap may have a mate."

"But why can't the train go on? A train slipping along the line can hardly be noticeable at that great height."

"If this train goes on," he answered, "there's no reason why others shouldn't, and the constant movement below is bound to be noticed by the Zepp people. Well, a train leads, in time, to a big town, and they have only to follow to find something worth chucking their bombs at."

"Then the trams ought to stop, too."

"Of course. It's simply inviting murder to run trams during an air raid. The flashes from those overhead cables can be seen miles up. Why, the airmen tell us that from two miles up they can see the light of a match—somebody lighting his cigarette—whereas they *can't* see coloured railway lights at all."

A silence fell upon them. He moved about restlessly under the arch. There was no sign of the train going on. From the station came a continual slither of promenading feet.

"Yes, we're in for a good spell of this," he said. "Sure you wouldn't like to go back to your seat?"

"I can breathe here," she answered. "Every day I'm poisoned for two hours or more, and it's a relief to be in the fresh air." She rose. "But I dare say *you* would."

"Not a bit of it. I like the inside of a railway compartment as little as you do." He had halted near her. "So you go up and down every day—you're a business woman?"

"Yes; I type. I help my brother—a solicitor."

"Rather interesting."

"Well, one feels one is helping one's own all the time. Better than being servant to a stranger."

He strolled up the line towards the train. It seemed to be a fitting part of an abnormal evening, this talking to a woman who was an entire stranger to him, whom he had not even seen, though he knew by her movements that she was young; by her speech, that hers was a self-contained, collected personality; by his touch, that she was well-fashioned. In fact, accustomed to a life of alarms which had sharpened his wits to a razor-edge, he had learned much more about this woman in this short time than a civilian would have done. Speaking personally, he felt that he was spending his air raid under exceptionally pleasant circumstances, for he had a companion who was really companionable. If she had been silly he would have bundled her back into the train long since. If she had tried to—well—flirt, with death hovering overhead, he would have been disgusted. And yet she had not assumed, as many girls did in these times, the "pal" towards him because he was a soldier—and being a soldier (as many women appeared to imagine) the especial and rightful prey of the female.

After a time he strolled back.

"You've been on your feet ever since you got out of the train," she said. "Come and sit down."

"Is there room?"

She laughed. "Not much. But I can 'make' it."

He was a pretty big fellow, and he grinned broadly in the shielding dark as he took his seat on the bricks. Women are great contrivers, but the way she had managed, by touch only, to set out the bricks so as to form a bench for two filled him with admiration.

"You are quite easy to handle," she said, and he knew she was dimpling.

"So much depends," he answered, "on how one is handled."

To ear, touch, and senses she was charming. He was wondering what a light would reveal.

"Tell me a tale," she said, when they had settled themselves. "We've got to pass the time somehow, and you soldiers always have something to talk about."

"You tell me one," he retorted. "I'm 'resting,' you know."

"I'll try and think of one. That's fair."

"Let's see—war horrors. Women generally find them fascinating."

"*I* don't. I've heard and read enough to last me a lifetime."

"Something else, then. Ah! here's something. My tale is called, dear reader, 'The Man Who Didn't Want Leave.'"

"That sounds well."

"Yes, the only man I know who doesn't want leave. The only man in the British Army."

"Got a wife," she jeered.

"Nothing so definite and final."

"I'm all attention."

"Well," he said, "a man I know had just become engaged to a girl when the war broke out. He gave up a good berth—seven hundred a year or so—and enlisted. He was one of the first hundred thousand. After the usual training he went to the Front, and spent some months ding-donging about in the trenches. Then, in a bit of a push, most of the officers in his battalion were killed or wounded, and he was offered a commission. He accepted it, but first he had to come back and go through another course of training, and during that time he saw a good deal more of the girl than during his previous training, and the conclusion he came to was that she had transferred her affections

to another man, a civilian, whom he did not like—as a man. He felt that the fellow had deliberately taken advantage of his absence in the trenches to cut him out—and had succeeded."

"What made him think that?"

"The girl's manner."

"Perhaps he wasn't very ardent, and she was using the civilian to pique him. Girls do."

"Possibly. Well, having gone through his second training, back he went to the Front again. He's been there some time now, and though he could have leave if he wanted it, he won't have it. He doesn't want to meet her again. He thinks he's cut out. That's all—halloa! The guns again!"

From a distance came a series of rapid detonations.

"This is tiresome," he said. "They're still about. Well, tell me *your* tale. You promised to cap mine."

"It oughtn't to be very difficult to do *that*," she said. "It is lucky you're a soldier and not a novelist."

"You think so, do you? May I remind you that *you* proposed that I should turn novelist? I did the best I could."

"You managed to invent a very poor sort of hero," she rejoined, tartly. "A man languishing in the trenches because he is afraid to come home and find he has been cut out! He ought to make sure! I think I can do better than that."

"Try."

She seemed to be considering her story. "My title, dear listener——"

"That," he interjected, "is an improvement, to start with."

She was not flirting, no! He would, of course, have been disgusted with a girl who tried to flirt in these circumstances. Yet there was a certain caress in this address of hers, and the "dear listener's" pulse was agreeably stirred. Her voice contained subtle cadences, and she could convey as much by her tone as by her words. In spite of the darkness—or because of it?—he was making her acquaintance very rapidly. He wondered if she had a temper. A touch of temper in a woman, to his thinking, gave her a finish.

"My title," she recommenced, "is, 'She Kept the Home Fires Burning.'"

"Cribbed!"

"*Will* you let me go on!" she exclaimed, stamping her foot. (So she had a temper!) "Or," she added, "Tried to Keep Them.'"

"Well, if that is not *just* like a woman!" he exclaimed, throwing back his head with a laugh. Forgetting the wall behind, the back of his head received a hard rap. She tittered unfeelingly. He, rubbing his head, scowled.

"Well, who *wouldn't* have laughed?" he demanded, crossly. "To call a story, 'She Kept the Home Fires Burning, or Tried to Keep Them,' is as bad as 'Lady Audley's Secret, or What She Thought Was a Secret.' Such a title would have doomed the book."

She sat up very straight. "If you please," she asked, "*am* I to tell my story?"

"Take your seats, please!" sounded the voice of the guard in the distance.

"There," she said, "it's too late!"

"Bosh! The old chap only wants to herd us in again, so as to be ready to start when he receives the order. We may be here another four or five hours."

"Very well," she said. "But I must cut my tale short. You have to thank your interruptions for that."

"Go on."

"You will say, dear listener, that my tale is a *little* like yours. The coincidence granted, I can assure you that it does not concern the same people. Well, a certain girl I know has been paid a good deal of attention by a certain man. He is a civilian, young and nice-looking, and perhaps the girl would have taken a 'fancy' to him, as they say, had she not known that he was, so to speak, dividing his time between herself and another girl whose sweetheart was in the trenches."

"The villain," he muttered.

"*No* interruptions! Still, the 'civvy' rather likes the girl who has *no* sweetheart, and she—I wonder if you'll believe in the purity of her motives?——"

"Now you're interrupting yourself!"

"A merited rebuke, dear listener. Well, she makes herself *very* nice to him because she's sorry for the sweetheart in the trenches who might otherwise be 'cut out.' And so, you see, she is trying to keep the home fires burning, and up to the present she has succeeded fairly well in doing so. She has no gift for nursing, and she is sure munition work would knock her up in a week, and she *couldn't* conduct a bus for a day, so that is how she is 'doing her bit.' Do you think she is doing it?"

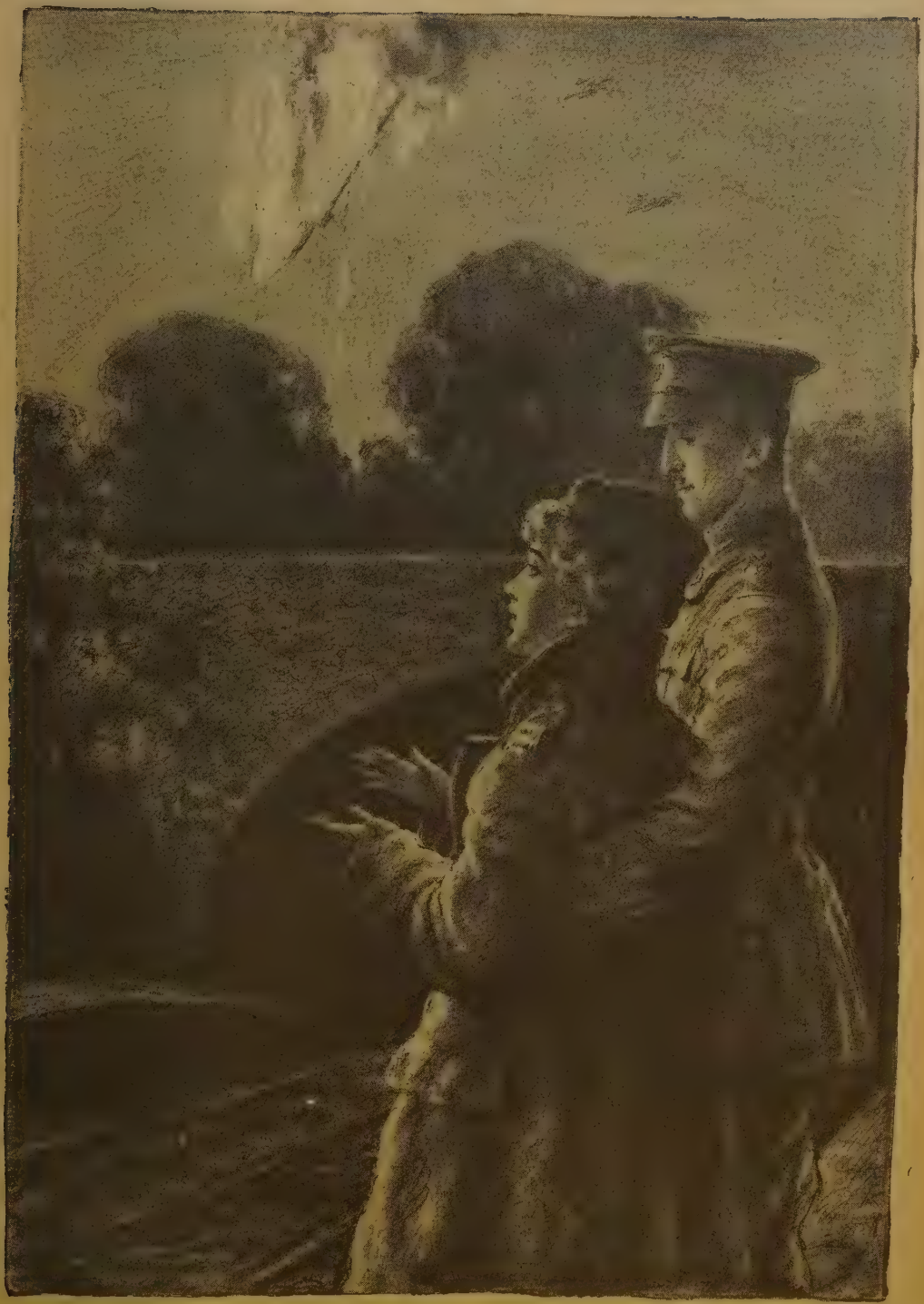
"Do I *think* she is!" he exclaimed, enthusiastically. "Why——"

When of a sudden a roar of cheering burst from the people assembled on the platform. The two under the archway stumbled out into the open and were immediately transfixed with wonder and awe. For, far away towards the east, the sky was lit up as if by a brilliant sunset. In the midst of this showed a fiery shape.

"The Zeppelin!" she breathed. "She's on fire! Oh, splendid—splendid!"

With such ejaculations they watched the monster airship drop and disappear. But while the sky was still all alight, the girl, glancing at the man, perceived, in the rays shed by this leviathan lamp, that he was looking at her. And he was looking at her in such a manner that she blushed red as the distant sky. At the same time she became aware that he had his arm about her. In stumbling out she had nearly fallen, and he had held her up. In the darkness his protecting arm was welcome, and even now she raised no protest. For this was a night of abnormal happenings, when the clock of convention had ceased to mark the time in its usual concise and measured way.

When the train at length resumed its journey



"'THE ZEPPELIN!' SHE BREATHED. 'SHE'S ON FIRE! OH, SPLENDID—SPLENDID!"

they found seats where they could, as did everybody else, and when they pulled up at their destination she could not but accept his escort through the dark streets to her home.

"You know," he said, as they walked along, "I shall pass on your tip to my pal. I shall tell him to be a man and give bursting shells a rest for a bit in order to come home and find out how he stands with his girl."

"You are *quite* sure, then," she asked, wickedly, through the darkness, "he is *still* at the Front?"

He laughed so heartily that a special constable glanced severely at them. You must not laugh heartily on raid nights.

"Quite sure. My tortured heart was *not* telling you its sad history. But if it comes to that, may I hazard a conjecture that I have the honour of escorting a heroine—a keeper-up of home fires?"

His own answer had been frank enough. He had good-humouredly set himself to find out how the land lay for a disconsolate pal in the trenches, and admitted as much. But from her he quite expected a baffling answer—to be left wondering whether she had just opened the book of some other woman's life and read him a page of it, or was reading him a page from her own. He was not a lady's man, yet he knew enough of the sex to be aware that a girl who seems as transparent as a brook in May-time can throw out concealing clouds as cunningly as a Zeppelin itself. There was a palpable hiatus between his question and her reply. The most sanguine person living would not have expected her to be so utterly devoid of the feminine instinct for evasion as to give him a direct answer, but with the directness she allowed herself she would have won, anywhere, first prize for straightforwardness as interpreted by lovely woman.

"I am," she said, "I admit, one of the girls in the story."

He sighed. "Eve," said he, "during the temporary absence of Adam, one day, filled in time talking to the Serpent, and it is really painful to me to think that, during the enforced absence of your *fiancé* in the trenches, you should have accepted the attentions of a mere civilian."

He spoke sternly and sadly.

"Oh, how *dare* you imagine such a thing!" she exclaimed.

"Then you are the girl who is 'fending off, the civilian? Come, be honest! Say 'Yes or 'No.'"

"You have dragged it out of me," she protested. "I didn't mean to tell you. But now you know so much, I'll tell you more. I wanted to find out how you viewed such a situation. By some people I am considered an outrageous flirt."

"They are sure to be people who don't count," he replied, comfortingly. "Ignore them. In such a good cause—guarding the interests of one of your country's defenders—you are justified in continuing to let this odious civilian press your hand and gaze into your——"

"Oh!" she exclaimed again, catching her breath. "As if I should ever have let it go as far as *that!* Besides—I forgot to tell you the end—these Zepps are a bother! The soldier-sweetheart is coming home, and the civilian seems to have shrunk two inches already."

Braving the Special, once again he laughed. These soldiers are devil-may-care fellows.

"True to all traditions of your sex," he said, "you put all your real information into the postscript. But I foresee danger. The civilian, now free to devote all his time to little 'Home Fires,' looms, to my mind, a positive danger. He has received encouragement. The protectress of the absent warrior's interests may now herself need protection."

She paused by a gate. "This is my house" fell, with the faintest of sighs, from her lips. "I am so much obliged to you for seeing me safely here."

He was gathering up his courage. He wanted to see her again, and had only just conceived a manner of leading up to it. For he was not versed in these arts. The civilian, no doubt, could have taken a strong and glib lead of him in this respect.

"Ethel," sounded a motherly voice from the doorway, "is that you, dear?"

She held out her hand.

"My leave is short," he said, desperately. "May I meet your train to-morrow?"

"Suppose"—she had time to be tantalizing—"it's held up again?"

"To be on the safe side, I'll meet you at the London end. May I?"

Their hands met. Then she ran in.

LEST YOU FORGET!

DO not forget that THE STRAND MAGAZINE *may now be sent* POST FREE *to British soldiers and sailors at home and abroad. All you need do is to hand your copies, without wrapper or address, over the counter at any post-office in the United Kingdom, and they will be sent by the authorities wherever they will be most welcome.*

THE PROBLEM CLUB.

By BARRY PAIN.

Illustrated by A. Garrett.

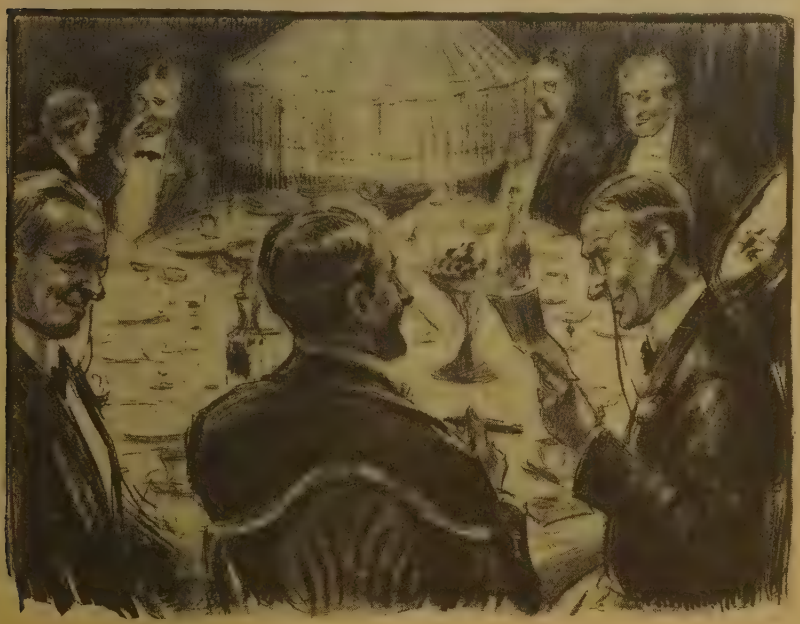
No. IX.—THE ALIBI PROBLEM.

LORD HERNGILL read out the demand made by the Editor of *The Pig-keepers' Friend* on the ingenuity of the members of the Problem Club. Members were required to produce evidence, that could be given in good faith, that at a certain hour, day or night, they had been in two places at once, the two places not being less than one hundred miles apart.

Lord Herngill said that he felt anxious and depressed. His manner and appearance, it may be added, hardly bore out the statement. He assigned his depression to two reasons. Firstly, other chairmen had had the simple task of adjudicating on a point of fact. He—a new member, a novice, a mere babe, as you might say—was required to undertake far more delicate and difficult work and to base his decision on an estimate of evidence. Secondly, the secretary for the evening was Mr. Wildersley. On the last occasion that Wildersley had acted as secretary he had adorned the minute-book with drawings of the chairman which were undoubtedly amusing and possessed of artistic merit, but at the same time were calculated to bring that chairman into ridicule and contempt.

"So you see, gentlemen," Lord Herngill continued, "that this is nervous work for me. However, I will make the plunge. Towards the end of dinner a telegram was handed to Mr. Feldane, over which I noticed him to be chuckling. May I inquire if it had any bearing on the problem before us?"

"Well, it had," Jimmy admitted. "Brainy work to have guessed it. But I'm not on in this act—I'm resting. The wire really concerns Hesseltine's claim."



"TOWARDS THE END OF THE DINNER A TELEGRAM WAS HANDED TO MR. FELDANE. MAY I INQUIRE IF IT HAD ANY BEARING ON THE PROBLEM BEFORE US?"

"You two generally hunt in couples. Perhaps Mr. Hesseltine will let you put his case for him."

"Anything that pleases you and saves me trouble," said Hesseltine, generously.

"Well," said Jimmy, "we can see for ourselves that Hesseltine is here to-night. I don't want to dwell on his misfortunes, but he looks much as usual. Talks in the same silly way too. But that telegram is his evidence that he is really in Liverpool. It is signed with his name and was handed in at a Liverpool office. I'll read it. 'So sorry to be unable to be with you to-night, but have promised to remain here to act as judge at local baby-show.' Well, it isn't for me to say anything, though I could."

"The evidence that Mr. Hesseltine is here," said the chairman, "is good. The evidence that he is in Liverpool is less good. A telegram is not necessarily dispatched by the man whose name is signed to it. Further, it seems to me improbable that a young bachelor would have been selected for the high office which

Mr. Hesseltine claims to have fulfilled. I think we shall do better than that. I will ask Mr. Pusely-Smythe how far he has succeeded in being in two places at once."

"It is easier to be in one place at twice," said Pusely-Smythe. "But I have done what I could, considering how unversed I am in the arts of deception." The applause which greeted this statement was possibly of an ironical character. "On the morning of Tuesday last," Pusely-Smythe continued, "I was at the Rectory, Meldon Bois, where I had been spending the week-end. The village of Meldon Bois is one hundred and eight miles from London. It had been my intention to leave Meldon Bois by the 10.5 a.m. for London. I had been pressed to remain for one more night, as there was to be a performance of a pastoral play in the grounds of the Rectory on Tuesday afternoon. I will not conceal it from you, sir, that the said pastoral play constituted the principal reason for my departure.

"You have grasped these facts? Very good. Now, on the morning of Tuesday, by the first post, I received a letter from my one and only aunt, who resides in London, to say that as I was coming up to town that morning she hoped I would lunch with her in Grosvenor Street and accompany her afterwards to hear a lecture on 'The Future of Eugenics.' I had been reluctant to witness the performance in the Rectory grounds, and I contemplated the idea of listening to this lecture with horror and loathing. That was the situation. I had to miss two birds with one stone.

"My first step was to telegraph to my one and only aunt as follows: 'Regret detained here. Am writing.' On the following morning she received a letter from me which I am able to produce in its envelope. The letter is in my own handwriting on paper stamped with the Rectory address. The letter is dated Tuesday evening, and the post-mark on the envelope shows that it was posted at Meldon Bois on that day. Now that letter not only states that I had remained so as not to miss the pastoral amateurs, but also makes several statements as to their performance, every one of which can be proved to be absolutely accurate. These statements are that Miss Sykes looked charming in some pale lilac-coloured contraption, that the comedian over-acted, that the weather was not entirely favourable, that some of the players seemed to find a difficulty in making themselves audible, that quite a nice sum was realized for the Cottage Hospital, and that the Rector in proposing a vote of thanks to the players said that where all were so good it would be invidious to differentiate. I have no doubt that on the strength of that letter and the details it contains, my aunt would give evidence in good faith that to her knowledge I must have been at Meldon Bois on Tuesday afternoon. Notwithstanding this, I left Meldon Bois on Tuesday morning, and on Tuesday afternoon I was playing bridge at my club in London, as various members of the club who met me there would attest."

"On the face of it," said the chairman, "it looks like rather a good case. I presume that you wrote the letter to your aunt before leaving in the morning, and gave it to a servant with instructions to post it after the performance."

"Precisely so."

"But how did you manage to give an accurate account of a performance at which you were really not present?"

"Well, Miss Sykes was staying at the Rectory and had told me what dress she would wear. The rest was intelligent anticipation. The glass was low, and, besides, the weather is always unfavourable for pastoral plays, and some of the players always fail to make their voices carry in the open. Given village amateurs, over-acting by the comedian is as certain as death. To put the receipts as a nice sum was quite safe. It was riskier to quote the Rector's actual words, but he's a kindly and tactful man with a circumscribed mind, so I thought I might chance it, and it came off."

The next few members on whom the chairman called produced nothing of interest. Dr. Alden had tried an idea of his own, and expressed the hope that the chairman would think better of it than he did himself.

Early one morning he had entered a tobacconist's shop where he was not known and investigated the man's stock of cigars. He found it difficult to make up his mind as to which of three different brands would suit him best. He took away with him a specimen of each, and said that he would try them after luncheon and let the tobacconist know. At three that afternoon Dr. Alden's man called at the tobacconist's with a note from the doctor saying that the trial had been made and naming the brand selected. Five hundred of this brand were ordered, and a cheque for the exact sum was enclosed in payment. The tobacconist was to deliver the goods to the bearer of the note, as the doctor was leaving for the country at four and wished to take some of the cigars with him. This was done, and probably the tobacconist would have been willing to swear in consequence that Dr. Alden was in London until four that day. As a matter of fact the doctor had left for the North by express shortly after ten that morning.

"Yes," said the chairman, "you convinced that tobacconist that you were in London when you were not, just as Pusely-Smythe convinced his aunt that he was not in London when he was. In each case it is the evidence of one person only. Have you done any better, Mr. Wildersley?"

"Better?" said Wildersley, cheerfully. "I should rather think I have. Cast your chair-maniacal eye over this sketch-book. It is filled with pencil drawings made from time to time, if not oftener, by the eminent Wildersley. The last few pages were made at the political meeting at Glasgow last week. They are dated in my own hand. There are notes as to the colour also in my hand. They are in my sketch-book. If they are not proof positive that I was at that meeting, then what are they? All the same I was in London while that meeting was being held, and can produce countless witnesses who saw me and spoke to me."

The chairman looked carefully at the drawings. "Not done from photographs, I suppose?"

"No, m'lord," said Wildersley. "All genuine hand-work and done on the spot."

Lord Herngill compared them with previous drawings in the book. "These look to me," he said, "as if they were done by somebody who was trying to imitate your technique but had not quite got it."

"Yes," said Wildersley, "that finishes us. You have it. The other artist member and I went into collaboration in this enterprise. Austin went to Glasgow, and made the sketches in the book with what he was pleased to call an imitation of the worst of the Wildersleian mannerisms. I remained in London giving my famous impersonation of myself. I added the date and manuscript notes afterwards. Still, if this book fell into the hands of somebody who had not the full use of his eyes—and very few people have—he might use it as evidence in good faith that I was at Glasgow at that date."

"Undoubtedly. I shall not forget your claim. Meanwhile, is there any other?"

"Yes," said Sir Charles Bunford, placidly. "I think my claim to have established an alibi is stronger than any you have heard yet. Birmingham is more than a hundred miles from London. A certain butler in Birmingham would swear that he saw me and spoke to me on a certain afternoon. A photographer in Birmingham would swear that he photographed me on that same afternoon, and would be able to produce the negative. Yet during the whole of that afternoon I was in London, as the evidence of many of my friends would show."

"And how was this miracle accomplished?"

"I'll tell you the story as briefly as I can. I went to stay for a fortnight with an old friend of mine, a bachelor named Fraser, who has a house outside Birmingham. He is a keen ornithologist. He employs in the preparation of specimens and so on a curious character called Mitten. Fraser only has Mitten's spare time. Mitten's regular work is with a Birmingham photographer, for whom he does developing and also has charge of the stock of negatives. Fraser is quite unlike me in the face, except that we both have the same deficiency of colour in the hair, but we are of about the same height and build. There is also a slight similarity in our voices. That was the rough material that I had at my disposal, and no doubt you can guess how I got my results from it."

"You'd better continue," said the chairman.

"On the day before I left I pointed out to Fraser that a similarity in mass often prevented a dissimilarity in detail from being noticed, and that the attitude of expectant attention is a frequent source of error. Fraser asked me, as I had thought he would, what I meant and what I was getting at. I replied that by taking advantage of the two facts I had mentioned he could probably get himself mistaken for me. He said that nobody would make the mistake. I said that our friend Hammond's butler would make it the next afternoon, if he cared to try the experiment.

"'I'd like to try it, but it's impossible. That butler has known me for the last two years, and he has only seen you four or five times in the afternoon. How could he be taken in?'

"'He has always seen you in dark and chastened clothing, such as it is your custom to wear. He has always seen me with a grey bowler, a light suit, white spats, and a distinctive necktie. He expects to see me to-morrow afternoon, because I borrowed an umbrella there to-day, and said I would bring it back then. All you have to do is to wear my clothes, and hand in that umbrella. He will expect to see me. He will actually see my clothes on a man of about my figure. The hall at the Hammonds' house is rather dark, and you will have the sun behind you. It's quite certain the man will be mistaken.'

"It was tried and happened as I had foretold. The butler addressed Fraser as Sir Charles."

"But how about the photograph?"

"That was done by means of a bet. Old Mitten is a great believer in system, and has his own infallible method for cataloguing photographic negatives so that a mistake is impossible. I chaffed him about it and told him that I would cause him to enter two lots of negatives wrongly. I offered to bet a sovereign on it and he accepted with avidity. I then settled with Fraser what we would do. Fraser booked an appointment with the photographer for the morning that I left for London, and I booked another for myself in the afternoon, the appointments being made by post. I kept Fraser's appointment just before I left for the station, and Fraser kept mine in the afternoon after he had finished with Hammond's butler. Mitten found out what had been done, of course, catalogued the negatives correctly, and has collected his sovereign. But I understand that he has not informed his employer, on the ground that the employer dislikes larks. The entries in the appointment book remain as they were. So that it is on record that I was photographed in the afternoon, though the photographic negatives entered under my name are really those taken from me in the morning."

"This," said the chairman, "is the most elaborate attempt we have had. Nobody else claims to have been seen in two places at the same time. I do not say that the evidence is perfect, but then the evidence of an alibi must always have a hole in it somewhere. Does anybody claim to have beaten it? Nobody? Then I have no hesitation in deciding in Sir Charles's favour, and I congratulate him on the distinction—which, so far, has been held by Mr. Pusely-Smythe alone—of winning the prize on two successive occasions."

The next problem was now read out. It was entitled "The Threepenny Problem," and ran as follows: "It is required to offer a half-crown for a threepenny bus-fare, and to receive the change wholly in threepenny-bits. No gift or promise of a gift may be made to the conductor to induce him to give the change in this form."

"That's the easiest we've ever had," grumbled Major Byles. "So of course it's my turn to be in the chair, and I can't compete."

CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]

CHÂTEAU CAMOUFLAGE—AN INTERESTING ILLUSION.

A LONDON amateur photographer, anxious to practise his hobby in spite of present restrictions, has been investigating the photographic possibilities of the coal-box. This precipitous cliff surmounted by an old castle is nothing more than a block of coal on which has been constructed a tiny castle in plasticine. Some idea of the actual size of the "scene"—which, incidentally, was photographed indoors—may begathered from the fact that the towers of the castle are but an inch and a half high!—Copyright photograph by P. W. Harris, supplied by Giles's Photo Agency.

A CHEAP TELESCOPE.

CONSIDERING its power, this telescope is, I think, remarkable for its cheapness. It was constructed for 1s. 4d. The object-glass is a lens of six-foot focus and an inch and a half in diameter, which cost 1s. The cardboard from which the tube was made cost 4d. For the eyepiece I usually use either one or two lenses of three and a half inches focal length out of a toy magic-lantern. Thus with one of these lenses a magnification of about twenty diameters is obtained, and with two, one of about forty. By using a lens of shorter focal length the power may be carried as far as about seventy diameters. These powers are sufficient to show the broad details of sun-spots and lunar craters; also Jupiter's moons, Saturn's rings, and Venus as a crescent may be seen. besides star clusters, double stars, etc. There is practically no colour at all in the image. The mounting shown is of the equatorial type and works quite well. It was constructed from an old box, an old tin, and an old piece of broomstick.—Mr. L. J. Freeman, 83, Mount Pleasant Road, N.15.

A CLOCK THAT NEED NEVER BE WOUND.

A CLOCK that never requires winding has been invented by Th. Dieden, of Karlslund, in Sweden. But although the clock does not require any winding, it is only a seeming—not a true—solution of the problem of perpetual motion, as it depends upon the variation of the weather—the barometrical pressure of the air—to keep going. Moreover, it is quite possible it might not work as well in a country where weather conditions are more constant than in the northern and middle European latitudes. The principle upon which it works can be seen below the clock face. The seven flat, round boxes you see there are made of very thin metal—new silver one-seventh of a millimetre in thickness, and filled with air of average temperature. Whenever the outside air-pressure changes the top plates move up and down, much as happens in the case of the barometer; and in the same way that the hand of the barometer is moved so here a cog-wheel moves, and by means of a chain pulls up or winds the clock.—Mr. W. J. L. Kiehl, de Kieft Kamp, Hierden, nr. Harderwijk, Holland.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for September, 1918.

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"'SHE'S BREATHING!' HE SHOUTED. 'SHE'S—SHE'S ALIVE, MAN! WHAT CAN WE DO?'"

(*See page* 159.)

DO NOT MISS THIS SPLENDID LITTLE SERIAL—WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED IN THREE PARTS.

DAVID AND JONATHAN.

By

E. TEMPLE THURSTON.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

CHAPTER I.

THE burning of the s.s. *Malaga* at sea off Cape Palmas, on March 23rd, 1909, is an event anyone can read of who chooses to take the trouble to look up the files of the newspapers of that date.

Of the story which is to be told here of the adventures of David Mortlake and John Hawkesley—hereinafter to be called David and Jonathan, as they were in their friendship at school—there is no record other than in this manuscript.

Friends all their life—at the time of the burning of the *Malaga* they were respectively thirty-six and thirty-seven years of age—they kept together through all the drama and tragedy of that catastrophe, and after two days on a ship's raft found themselves washed up, as Jonathan declared, somewhere along the Ivory Coast, on a deserted beach with a tropical forest and swamp before them and a mile of rolling surf to the open sea behind.

In comparison of their two characters, it is sufficient to describe what they had made of their lives since leaving school. David had gone up to the 'Varsity, and, at the age of twenty-three, having easily attained his B.A. and being left an income by the unexpected generosity of a distant relative, had taken rooms in the Albany and drifted into the easy life of a man about town. Many artistic capacities he showed, but pursued none with ambition. Yet somehow or other, he managed to keep his touch with the progression of life, more by the quality of his advanced mentality than from any desire to succeed or achieve recognition.

The career, as a mining engineer, which Jonathan had undertaken carried him into far countries, prospecting for his company. The work suited his temperament. He had a strong vein of adventure in him, combined with a proud satisfaction in the loneliness of his own company.

Such types they were, then, these two, cast adrift on that desolate beach. They represented, as it were, the old civilization and the new; Jonathan with all the force of physical nature, silent but insistent in him; David with all the force of Nature's increasing mentality, leaping towards the unknown.

Here on this beach, the first day, they found the apparent aperture of a channel through the giant sea-rushes, leading into the heart of the upper-growth beyond. With all the spurious energy that comes to a man eager for discovery and with no experience of the dangers entailed, David was for starting upon an expedition inland at once.

Jonathan's superior knowledge of that country and the difficulties of progress in a tropical forest prevailed against this.

"We'll stop on the beach to-day," said he, "and see if anything gets washed up. To-morrow's time enough to start on that trip."

So they stayed on the beach another day and night. Some reward for this the sea brought them. They had already found one of the *Malaga's* boats washed ashore, the occupants drowned, but it was no ill-wind to them that had driven those poor creatures to their disaster. Some water-bottles they got; a greater part of the boat's equipment, including an axe, some rope, and various other things.

The next day there were washed ashore an

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oilskin and two more bodies—men. In the pocket of one of the coats was a steel and flint lighter with the tinder cord sodden but still capable of being ignited when dry; a pipe and some tobacco in a pouch, also a sovereign-case containing six pounds.

Jonathan took out a sovereign and offered it to David.

"Give you a quid," he said, "if you find a tin of biscuits."

There was the value of money as they found it in those elemental environments—a symbol, no more, but without the power of the law, without the vestige of civilization to give it value.

It was that night, as they lay down on the beach together to find some sleep after the days of buffeting on the sea, that David first put the question which had been running in his mind all that day.

"What chance," said he, "do you think there is of our getting out of this?"

"Being picked up by a boat?" asked Jonathan.

David grunted an affirmative.

"The remotest," he replied. "They don't come in near this shore for another two or three hundred miles. The *Malaga* was nearer than most."

"Then what chance——?"

"Through that forest?" Jonathan interrupted.

David nodded his head.

"Not the chance of a dog," was the answer he received.

CHAPTER II.

THE channel across their beach opened wide at the end of a sort of gully to the sea. The first hundred yards or so were through the swamp and that deep fringe of what can only be described as sea-grass, but tall and strong in the stem as the toughest of young bamboo. Progress was slow, however, since they were paddling with the broken blade-end of an oar washed up with one of the ship's boats. And the farther they went into the maze of it, the darker, the more silent and unhealthy-looking it became. The sound of the breaking sea became more and more distant. After a time the rustle of wind in the grass-tops above their heads almost shut it out; another hundred yards or so, and so dense was the vegetation about them that they heard it no more.

They talked a good deal at first, and then, when David found the sound of his voice, hitting as it were against that wall before them and coming back into his face with an eerie whispered echo of what seemed its natural tone, he gave it up and they went on in silence.

For an hour or more they had made their way through the forest, where sometimes what looked like the great root of a gigantic tree became a live thing, an eight-foot crocodile, slithering down into the water and lying in the black depths to continue his sleep. Then, almost suddenly, it seemed, the forest ended. They drifted into an open swamp again, with tall elephant grasses riding high above their heads, but filtering-in a greater wealth of light.

As suddenly as that swamp began it ended. They emerged into the bright light of the sun once more and there was a beautiful sandy beach, about sixty feet wide, beyond which rose a rocky bluff, sheer up from the sand, at least as high as the highest mahogany tree.

Here Jonathan looked well about him, at the gradual slope on one side of that little bay where banana trees, ground-nuts, and tomatoes all grew in a lavish profusion, and the evidences of orange trees and wild yams were to be seen everywhere. He went across to the foot of the rocky bluff, where, finding water dripping from one of the fissures in meagre drops, he put his finger on the place, then laid it on his tongue. After that, he turned round to David.

"This place," said he, "is where you and I will have to live for God knows how long."

After the toiling through the forest and those two nights on the sea, David could not have asked for a better prospect. Considering such experiences as they had had, the whole atmosphere of the place seemed to suggest a haven of refuge.

He looked up at Jonathan when, with somewhat of a despondent note in his voice, he had made that announcement and replied: "Well—hang it all—we've both read 'Robinson Crusoe' and 'Swiss Family Robinson' and made pretence of playing at them, if I remember my youth as well as I ought. Dash it, last year in London, when that week of fogs was on, I'd have given a thousand quid to be transported to a place like this and told to shift for myself."

Jonathan nodded his head, saying: "Right you are"—but the tone in his voice implied: "There's such a thing as transportation for life."

One did not often hear that note in his voice. David knew now he was speaking from a wider knowledge of the conditions than his own. But even his knowledge did not embrace every condition with which they found their lives were to be so intimately concerned.

CHAPTER III.

DAVID'S allusion to Swiss Family Robinson was evidently made because that aspect of it appealed to his lively imagination.

Jonathan had said they might be there for some weeks before any chance of escape offered. The first thing they did therefore was to build some sort of habitation ensuring them shelter and sleep at night, as well as security from stray beasts, such as leopards amongst those rocks, or crocodiles coming up out of the swamp.

It must have been a lively business, this making a home for themselves, rather than going to the nearest house-agents to inquire what residential quarters he had vacant on his books. The erection of a palisade to keep out the crocodiles from the swamp; the starting of a bonfire at dusk to drive away mosquitoes, and any prowling leopard that might chance to be attracted by the sounds of life in those still places; the building of a temporary hut with a roofing of broad banana leaves, stitched together with the pins of bamboo spikes, all

these performances they set to work upon with a great enthusiasm.

It was on the third day when, so to speak, they had established themselves in their new home and David's hands were too blistered to do any more work, that Jonathan proclaimed the necessity for a course of action embracing every opportunity for securing their escape.

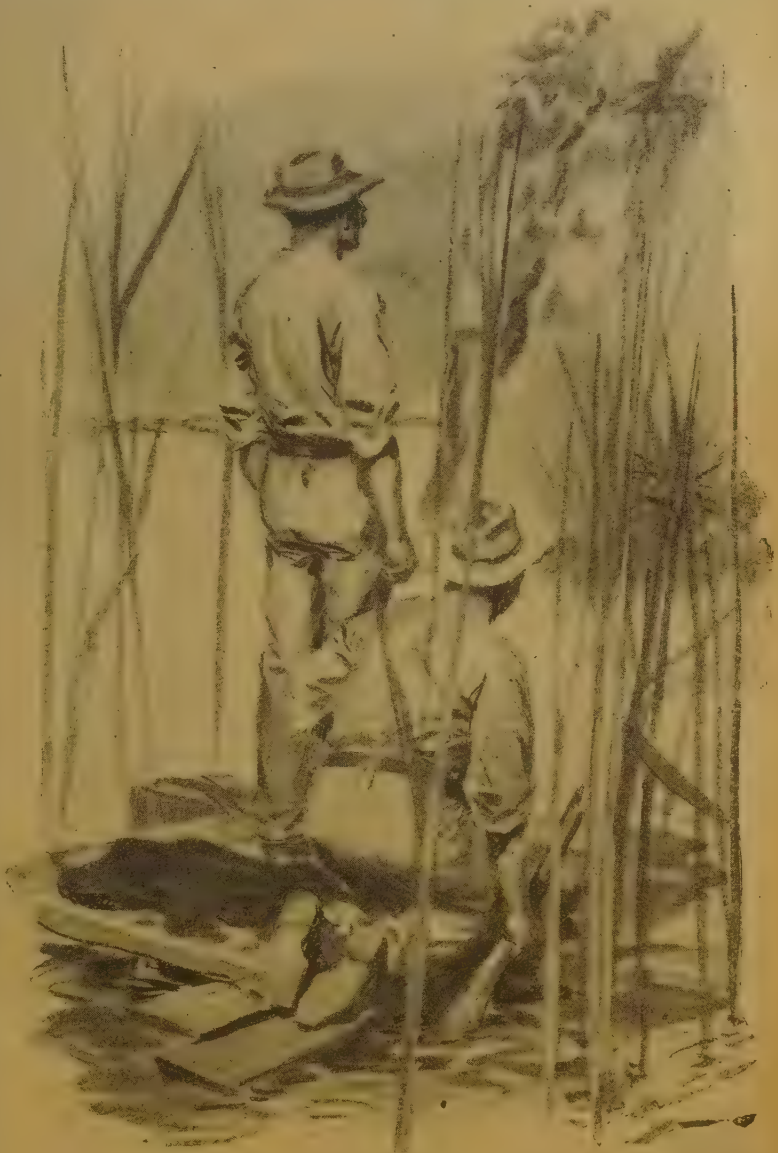
"We shall have to scramble through that forest again, back to the beach," he said, "and set up some sort of distress-signal in the hope of some devil putting up his glasses in this direction from a passing ship. Now we've got a base to work from, that's the first precaution."

With the fine weather they had had during those last five days, the sea had taken a surface of azure-coloured glass; the tall grasses were listless in the still air, and the fields of surf were no longer ploughed with foam. Lazily, one after the other, the waves came rolling in, but the sting of the storm had gone out of them.

They had brought with them a long bamboo pole. It must have been thirty or forty feet in length. This was to be used as a flagstaff for the signal of distress. A poor makeshift it was, not intended to be permanent, but Jonathan would waste not a day, or leave any effort unmade to attract the attention of any ship, however distant, that might be passing. He was more eager in those first few days to get away than was David, perhaps because he had less hope, or partly on account of his knowledge of what life would really mean in such a place.

They fixed their flagstaff firmly in the sand, with that flutter of white at the head of it—some garment they had taken from one of the bodies that had been washed ashore. When once three cheers were given, nothing would satisfy David but he must swarm up it, as far as its thickness would allow, just to see what sort of an advantage it gave to that bit of white flapping up there. Up he went, half-way, Jonathan standing there below on the sandy beach, laughing at his efforts. David was laughing too, it was so confoundedly greasy and only his bare feet could grip it. Then, as he looked out to sea, all the laughter went out of him as though a sudden wind had blown it off his lips. In a second he had slithered down to the ground and was gasping to Jonathan what he had seen.

"There's a boat!" he exclaimed; "there's a boat—a ship's boat—drifting in-shore. . . I—I think I saw people in it. I'll swear I did."



"AS SUDDENLY AS THE SWAMP BEGAN IT ENDED. THEY EMERGED INTO THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF THE SUN."

And there, sure enough, from the ground, but almost concealed below the higher line of breakers, was a boat, lifting one instant into sight in a sag of the line of surf, then disappearing completely from view.

For five minutes Jonathan never said a word, until he had made sure of it at least half-a-dozen times, then he turned to David.

"It's one of the *Malaga's* boats," he said. "They've kept off-shore all these days, hoping, I suppose, to stay in the track of steamers. There can't be a soul alive in her, or at any rate with any strength left, because the drift has caught them. They're washing in this way sure enough. If we could save that boat——!"

He said no more, but at once began stripping off all his clothes.

"In the name of Heaven——!" David began.

"I'm going to have a shot and swim for it," he said.

And there was nothing left to do but for David to have his shot as well.

"THEN, AS HE LOOKED OUT TO SEA, ALL THE LAUGHTER WENT OUT OF HIM AS THOUGH A SUDDEN WIND HAD BLOWN IT OFF HIS LIPS."

CHAPTER IV.

It was not to be expected that David should succeed, or Jonathan either, for that matter. At least, however, he accomplished more than David's strength allowed him. He got out far enough to save the boat before it was capsized between the furrows of that field of foam. With almost superhuman effort he righted her as she came reeling in towards shore, all broadside on and half awash in the fret of the tumbling water. With the final help of David, her keel was grounded in the slush of the sand. They could not heave her high and dry. Had she been empty, she was one of the heaviest of the *Malaga's* boats. But there, flung about in the bottom between the thwarts, all in the helpless attitudes of death, were six bodies—four women and two men of the *Malaga's* crew.

One by one they lifted them out of the boat and laid them on that same warm beach of sand they had been so thankful for only a few days before.

Callous as it may seem, they were far more concerned with what had been brought in the boat which would be of use, even down to the contents of their pockets, than at the sight of those six lifeless bodies. That they had struggled for so many days against adversity and failed—moreover, what all the horrible circumstances of that failure must have been, for here there were only six, whereas when she had left the *Malaga's* side the boat had been full—seemed in no way so full of tragedy as the fact that there was only one half-full box of biscuits left of all their stores. Both men had pipes and some quantity of tobacco left. They could hardly have smoked at all for those ten days or so. Every one of them had died from some form of exhaustion and sickness brought on by thirst. All the water-bottles were dry as bones. Many, no doubt, had gone mad, as they do under the strain of acute thirst, and thrown themselves overboard. So at least they accounted for those six bodies remaining out of the boat-load which had set forth from the side of the burning *Malaga*.

This callousness may seem more understandable where the bodies of the men were concerned. To David, as he came to the body of one of the women, more a girl she was, scarcely twenty-four or five, all eagerness for the discovery of things of use to them left him. As he bent over her the sense of sacrilege to the dead came suddenly over him when he looked into her face. The next second, with the last half of the breath he was that moment breathing, he had shouted Jonathan's name.

He looked up from where he was kneeling, caught in a sudden tension of interest by the note in David's voice:

"She's breathing!" he shouted. "She's—she's alive man! What can we do?"

Though David put the question, he was the only one of those two who knew what was best to be done. It was patently enough a case of exhaustion, of fever brought about by the prolonged need of moisture in her system.

David always carried his fountain-pen and a filler, and had laughed over the fact with Jonathan only two days before, because devil a drop of ink could he ever hope to make or find in that corner of the world. Now that filler was invaluable. Charged with brandy from Jonathan's flask which they had brought with them, he got some of the liquid well down her throat, past the terribly parched tongue she had. Slightly she shivered, as the warmth of it found its way into her veins. But it was a long time before she returned to actual consciousness.

It must have been half an hour before she opened her eyes; another hour at least before she could utter a word, and then in that rasped and hoarse tone of voice as though the very cords in her throat were drawn and withered with the drought in her body.

She asked where she was. David did his best to explain, realizing how foolish any explanations must really be to her then. After a while, he fed her with pieces of biscuits, soaked in brandy and water. Even then it was with the greatest pain and effort she could swallow them. Nevertheless, they gave her strength. There was a moment when she fastened her feverish eyes on him in gratitude.

In about two hours' time she had regained sufficient strength to bear being lifted into the boat. Then, with all their new-found possessions, amongst which the boat, of course, was the most invaluable of all, they set out, up that gully from the sea, back by the path through the swamp and the forest to the creek.

CHAPTER V.

In about seven or eight days, Joan—as her name proved to be—was well enough to leave the hut for the first time and, on David's arm, to walk out into the sunshine. For all that time he, alone, had nursed and tended to her. There was enough of the feminine quality in his temperament, detracting nothing from his masculinity, to enable him to sense acutely the things that mean much to women, without pretending to understand the intrinsic quality of the things themselves.

Gradually, David had told her all their schemes, the plans they were making for their comfort and ultimate escape, until, with the returning of her strength, she became as eager as a child to be up and helping them in the work, the benefits of which she was herself to share.

She was full of curiosity about Jonathan, this man who was only visualized so far to her by a constant sound of hammering. Again and again she asked David why he did not come to see her.

"We shall have to meet sooner or later," she said once with a laugh.

And he had to invent all sorts of excuses, the most convincing of which was the true one, that Jonathan was not, first and foremost, a ladies' man, and certainly was not at his best as a conversationalist in their bedroom.

"I think I shall like him," was Joan's reply to that.

It becomes necessary here to sketch as briefly as possible the type of woman she was. Her

father was prominently connected with diamond mines near Kimberley; a big and evidently a wealthy man in his way. Believing in an English education, he had sent his daughter to England to school at the age of ten, and there, in charge of friends whose leniency had given her every freedom, she had been brought up. Every year her father had come home for a month or so to see her. Her mother was dead. From all these circumstances, and receiving a generous allowance from her father, she had grown up with an unusual sense of freedom in a girl, and an uncommon spirit of independence as compared with many women they met before the war.

Asked by David on one of those occasions when she was speaking of her upbringing why she had never married, she replied:—

"But why? Why ask that?"

"Well, I take it," said he, boldly, "you're half-way between twenty and thirty. Most girls come to matrimony by then with less qualifications for it than you."

By the use of that phrase she knew, apparently, that he was avoiding a compliment, and doubtless liked him the better for it. She did not, anyhow, press to know what sort of qualifications he implied. A sensible woman knows the full extent of her attractions and prefers deeds for compliments rather than words. She did not, however, answer his question, but put another straight to him.

"Are you married?" she inquired.

"Neither of us are," said he.

"Well, I take it you're between thirty and forty and with necessary qualifications—why haven't you?"

For himself David replied that there was a little matter of finding the one woman.

"Do you imply from that," she asked him, "that there's a superfluity of the right men?"

This is an example of the conversations they had in the hut while he was attending to her and, invariably, by some turn of her wit, or twist of his sense of humour, they all ended in laughter. Hearing it, between the blows of his improvised hammer or the swing of his axe, Jonathan often chafed at the sound, when the blows with which he followed it were the heavier though not necessarily the more effective.

CHAPTER VI.

SHE appears to have proved an excellent worker when her mood did not incline her to be too feminine.

This femininity displayed itself in various ways. She had told them on one occasion that the day following was her birthday.

"How old do you think I shall be?" she asked Jonathan, with a directness that reduced him to confusion. They could see him go red under the tan of his skin, and David honestly felt sorry for him. She never felt a twinge, or, if she did, concealed it with laughter that rang with real amusement.

"You can say just what you think," she said; "there are no other women present."

Jonathan hazarded twenty-three to be on the safe side, whereupon she turned to David, ignoring Jonathan for the rest of the conversation, because she knew he had funked it.

It was a few hours after she had informed them of the coming event that David was going through the forest to fetch the day's water from the stream they had discovered on their arrival, the existence of which, indeed, had primarily made the creek habitable.

On his return with the bucket they had found on the *Malaga's* boat, he heard a sound of whining in the thick undergrowth near the edge of the rough track they had cut to the stream. The sight of a little female tree-bear, scurrying away at the sound of his approach, was quite sufficient to tell him what had happened. One of her young 'uns had fallen from his perch, and not all the King's horses, or all the King's men, as expressed in her piteous maternal anxieties, could set the wretched little beast up again.

David found the little beggar easily enough. He was whining his heart out at the punishment, probably for his own disobedience, but he was quite unhurt. A huge patch of tropical moss, as thick as a feather-bed, had broken his fall, and though he looked a bit dazed—he must have fallen only a few moments before—there were no bones broken.

How to get him back again up those colossal trees, if it was a problem to his mother was certainly a riddle to David. And then, in a flash of inspiration, he thought of Joan, her birthday, and the attendant celebration, the observance of which she had so unconsciously forced upon their minds.

The only impulse he was aware of at the time was the thought that she would go into ecstasies over it, if there were such an emotion as the maternal instinct in her at all. Having come, then, to that decision, David picked it up in his arms and carried it back towards the creek. Just before he reached the edge of the forest he plaited together some strong vine tendrils, made a halter for it, and tethered it up where it would be quite safe till the next day, and that evening, when nothing was doing, he went back to see how it was and give it some honey.

That Jonathan was no less anxious to celebrate this occasion was plain enough. He suggested they should have some sort of a feast, and had gone down in the small canoe they had built to the beach, there spending the whole day fishing in the channel that connected their waterway through the swamp with the sea.

In the evening he returned well satisfied with the results. There was every prospect of what to them would be a banquet, and the more pleased David saw he was, the less inclined he felt to tell him of the present he had found for Joan.

Here was the beginning of secrecy. Jonathan, too, had kept his secret. On the way back from the beach he had picked a collection of the most gloriously coloured orchids, and had hidden them somewhere behind the hut. David saw them, by accident, standing in a wooden bowl filled with swamp-water, keeping fresh for the decoration of their table.

David must have thought nothing of that secrecy at the time, for there was he with something up his own sleeve as well. He never supposed Jonathan was vying with him for a place in her estimation. It must have been unconscious in both of them. Yet there inevitably it was, and on that day of her birthday there was germinated in them a seed of jealousy, the growth of which no civilization could ignore, no gloss of speech or veneer of habits and custom could disguise.

When she appeared at that birthday feast they both looked at her in amazement, with no little admiration too. For the last few weeks they had only seen her in an unbecoming suit of sailor's trousers, secured with straps over her shoulders, and in appearance, at least, had come to regard her as a creature much like themselves. Here, however, was a woman, and all the more fascinating by contrast, just as was Réjane, in "La Passerelle," when she first makes her appearance in beautiful clothes in the second act.

Jonathan's discomfort can well be imagined. He had come so much to regard her—as they say in familiar parlance, "in those trousers"—as one of themselves, that he was completely bowled over by the dramatic situation of that change of dress. He forgot all about the flowers he had gathered with such trouble. David was none too comfortable himself.

It was not that she was so extraordinarily well dressed, for her things were badly creased—a fact she pointed out to them straight away. It was, to put it concisely, that she was a beautiful woman, the more beautiful to them, perhaps, who for nearly the last two months had seen nothing but an able seaman whose strength they had tacitly agreed upon must not be overtaxed.

"Don't look so amazed," she said, as she stood there in the doorway, laughing. "It's my birthday—mayn't I dress up?"

They all sat down, Jonathan and David paying her attentions, quite unconsciously waiting on her with an excess of zeal; or, if they were aware of it, telling themselves that it was because it was her birthday.

It was she, naturally enough, who noticed the orchids, and long before Jonathan realized how their existence had slipped out of his mind.

"Who got the flowers?" she asked, as she sat down. She looked from one to the other of them. There was no need for any reply. Jonathan's face was a study, if not in scarlet, then of that expression which goes with the colour.

"You got them!" she exclaimed, and they could see how surprised she was that the thought had come from him. So surprised was she, indeed, that she leant forward across the table and just touched his hand in the simplest and most unaffected expression of gratitude one could have imagined. No one on earth could have accused her of any purpose or impulse but that of gratefulness, but the moment she had done it no one could have been so blind as not to observe the effect it had.

It was as though in that instant she had set her choice on Jonathan. David knew he felt that; he knew also that at the expression which swept over his face, and the sight of her hand touching his, his own blood rushed like a hot spring, boiling beneath the surface of the ground. It was all he could do not to make a fool of himself, not to get up then and there, saying to himself he would leave them to their love-making in peace, if that was their inclination.

Fortunately for himself, he did nothing of the kind. She nevertheless saw the effect of what she had done, and the next second had taken her hand away with a quick gesture and a nervous laugh.

CHAPTER VII.

DAVID waited until the feast was over, and then, as casually as he could, said he had got a present for her.

She became like a child, wanting to know what it was. With some ceremony he brought in the little beast of a bear, tumbling about at the end of his plaited halter like a collie-pup, all hair and no shape, with a couple of eyes like the black heads of hat-pins sticking a yard out of his head.

Joan had often seen tree-bears in the forest, and needed no introduction to know what it was. The next instant it was in her arms, and for a couple of healthy men, during those moments while she talked nonsense to it, they must have looked the biggest fools in creation.

There was one second, however, when she looked her gratitude at David over the top of its head, and in sole possession of that look he went out into the creek intensely happy.

For the rest of that day the little beast monopolized the whole of her time, and in all the affection she bestowed upon it, David felt he had some sort of proprietary share. He knew Jonathan had the sense of being right out of it. The possession of the creature had completely laid hold upon the hidden depths of her imagination. She had forgotten the flowers; forgotten the awkwardness of that moment when she had touched his hand. David had no reason to deny that he was glad. He felt that he had won the day which had begun so well in Jonathan's favour. What is more, there were some moments when, as Jonathan looked at that animal in her arms, he almost hated his friend.

In this manner appeared the first palpable change which had come about in their friendship. After a night's sleep, with doubtless not a few hours of thought over all that had happened that day, they were not a little shocked to discover the change it had wrought in them, But once realizing it, they did all they knew to pull themselves together.

Civilization, after all, was not so far behind them in those first few weeks.

Jonathan was the first to speak the necessary word. He the most completely of the two had deceived himself with good sound reasons.

"Unless we take damned good care of ourselves," he said, "this girl's going to make a hopeless mess of all our plans to get away. We

aren't here for the fun of the thing and, as far as I can help it, we're not going to stay for the fun of it either. It's no good working against each other. We've got to work together."

For answer, David just took hold of his hand and wrung it.

"My dear old chap," he said, with the deepest sincerity, "I've been trying to say something as sensible as that, ever since I got up."

"Well, she's nothing to us," said Jonathan.

"Tell her," said Jonathan, "tell her what our interests are—that they're not in seeing who can pay her the most acceptable attentions, but in finding a way out of this beastly place as quickly as we can, and that she must co-operate in every way it is possible for her to do so. It is no good her dancing in in a Bond Street costume when there's work to be done all day and every day. We must make our first shot by launching the boat, and if we get her off we

"THE NEXT INSTANT IT WAS IN HER ARMS, AND FOR A COUPLE OF HEALTHY MEN, DURING THOSE MOMENTS WHILE SHE TALKED NONSENSE TO IT, THEY MUST HAVE LOOKED THE BIGGEST FOOLS IN CREATION."

"Nothing," said David.

"We never saw her till three weeks ago."

"That's all."

"The whole point is," Jonathan continued, "that if we go on fooling over her and fussing about her like we did yesterday, our little limited company of interests is going to go to blazes. There's only one way to put a stop to it."

Not seeing it so easy a matter as that, David inquired what it was.

may be some days at sea and have ultimately to return here after all. What I've been aiming at is to make this place as comfortable a base for operations as it's possible to make it, and then when that's done as a safeguard, to leave no stone unturned to get away."

To these suggestions of Jonathan's, David made a sensible amendment.

"Tell her," he said; "tell her by all means. Let's have a serious talk with her. But it's not a bit of good putting it down to her dressing up

in her Bond Street fal-lals. Don't let's say anything about that."

"Why not tell her exactly what we mean, and have done with it?" asked Jonathan.

"Because what we mean," replied David, "is about the weakest part of what we want to say. What we mean is that we're afraid of her sex, and what we want to say is that we don't care a tu'penny cuss about it one way or another."

The honesty of this was too subtle for Jonathan.

"Say it your own way, then," said he; "but let's have her in now and get it over."

She came at once to David's calling, dressed as she had been for those past few weeks in her seaman's trousers suspended with straps over her shoulders.

"Have I done anything wrong?" she asked, looking from one to the other.

"Can't we call you in for a talk without you thinking that?" said David. "We're a limited liability company, not yet floated, but we want to float one day, if we get the chance."

Still she looked from one to the other, knowing well they had not called her in to tell her that.

"Well, what have you got to say?" she asked, guardedly.

"Only this," replied David, no less on guard himself—"that we want to get out of this place. That sounds like a platitude, but it needs to be said, because it entails certain things we want to talk to you about."

"Go on," she said, quietly.

"Well, there are two ways of escape," he continued—"at least two ways that lie in our compass to attempt. The chance of a passing ship we've provided for, with signals as well as we can. That's in the lap of the gods."

"There are so many things in that lap," said she.

"Exactly. We can't leave it alone at that. And with the other two ways, there are risks—pretty considerable ones. What we want to know is, if you're prepared, when you hear what they are, to share them?"

"What are they?"

Jonathan interposed here, telling her of the attempt they intended to make through the forest.

"So far as I can calculate," he said, "we're something like fifty or seventy miles—maybe more—from the nearest place of habitation. When we get to that it'll be no more than a few huts. However, it would be in touch with the world again. Even so, that fifty or seventy miles is through tropical forest. The other chance is the sea; launching the boat across that surf and getting out to a passing ship—a matter of twenty or thirty miles, perhaps—limited provisions again. The risk is always the same—starvation."

All this Jonathan must have said as though he were giving orders to his foreman.

"Did you call me in here," she asked, proudly, "because you thought I wasn't prepared to share any risks that were going?"

There must have been something besides pride in her voice, for David was very quick to answer that.

"No—no—no," he said, hurriedly. "We know you're game enough for anything. It isn't that a bit. It is that we must work together; help, not hinder each other. In this deserted place we're right up against it, and the ordinary civilized laws don't exist."

In a moment of inspiration, he thought of a better way of putting it.

"It all amounts to this," he said. "We were afraid you hadn't got the hang of the situation; that you wanted to be treated with extra attentions because you were a woman—whereas, in this situation we find ourselves flung into, there's no such thing as sex at all. We want to get out, and that's all there is about it."

He looked at Jonathan and emphatically Jonathan nodded his head.

"David's got it in a nut-shell," he said, abruptly. "In an affair like this, everybody's one of a company, and we've got to hang together."

She listened quite quietly to all this after that first moment of pride when, as David had seen, she was certainly hurt. When Jonathan had finished she said:—

"Then I mustn't persuade you to give me little presents on my birthday—or pay me attentions of any kind, because that interferes with the work and creates a sense of friction in the company. That's right—isn't it?"

They looked at her. They looked at each other but said nothing.

"That's what you mean—isn't it?" she repeated. "And I'm not to put on my best, because it's my only frock, as, in a situation like this, there's no such thing as sex. I believe I've got your meaning, haven't I?"

"You've got the gist of it," said Jonathan.

"If you'll take it," added David, "in the spirit in which it was meant."

She looked at them, smiled, but said no more and then went out of the hut. They remained for a moment staring at each other when she had gone. David was the first to break the silence.

"We're a couple of the most consummate fools that God ever made," said he.

In amazement Jonathan asked why.

"She understands all right," he said. "She told us she did. Why, she realized we were hinting about her rigging herself up in that dress yesterday! I thought that showed quite a nice sense of understanding."

"Oh, yes—she understands," David replied. "There wasn't a word or a look she didn't understand and a good deal better than we do ourselves. You've travelled all over the world, and you talk about elemental laws and symbols and impulsory instincts as though they were things that had to be learnt by experience, before a man can set his life by them. That girl's got more knowledge of them in the tip of her little finger without going out of a London drawing-room than you've collected in fifteen years' tramping round the world."

(To be continued

GENERAL FOCH AS HE IS.

By HENRI DE FORGE.

The Man and the Soldier—His Character, Habits, and Opinions—His Principles of War.

THE German papers, which have frequently spoken with bitter irony of the French generals, and which always treated them with a haughty condescension, use nothing but grave and respectful words when they treat of General Foch.

"Here is one worthy of measuring swords with the best German generals." Such was the appreciation given him by the *Breslauer Zeitung* in the early months of the war, even before Foch had shown the full measure of his greatness. And, recently, the *Gazette de Cologne* said: "We have to count with a redoubtable adversary in General Foch. He is a leader who knows what he wants and who will act with calm tenacity."

There is the man, accurately portrayed in homage paid by the enemy. The Generalissimo of the united Allied Armies is remarkable for his imperturbable calm, a tranquillity never ruffled. He has none of Joffre's smiling *bonhomie* and easy good-nature. He is reserved in speech and gesture. He is cold. Above all, he is simple—a man of few words.

One of his orderly officers has drawn this portrait of him:—

"He is a man who has kept young. He is slight and supple and rather delicate in appearance, with a fine head."

What strikes one most at first sight is his clear, penetrating, vitally-intelligent, but, above all, *luminous* glance. His wonderful eyes spiritualize the whole face, which otherwise might appear surly, with the great moustache jutting over a projecting jaw. When he talks he becomes intensely animated. Usually, however, his calm face is stamped with sadness, for he has given his son and his son-in-law to France.

No one has told, although it is a fact, how never a day passes without his withdrawing for a few moments of meditation in the nearest church; it may be only a shell-shattered ruin. He always goes alone, and never mentions his going to his officers. It is no mere parade of religion. It is simply that he needs every day to withdraw awhile from life's turmoil and draw close to the Master of all men and all destinies. There is nothing theatrical, no "show-off" about this action—no pompous invocation of the Almighty, after the manner of the Kaiser. It is a simple act of true piety by a simple man.

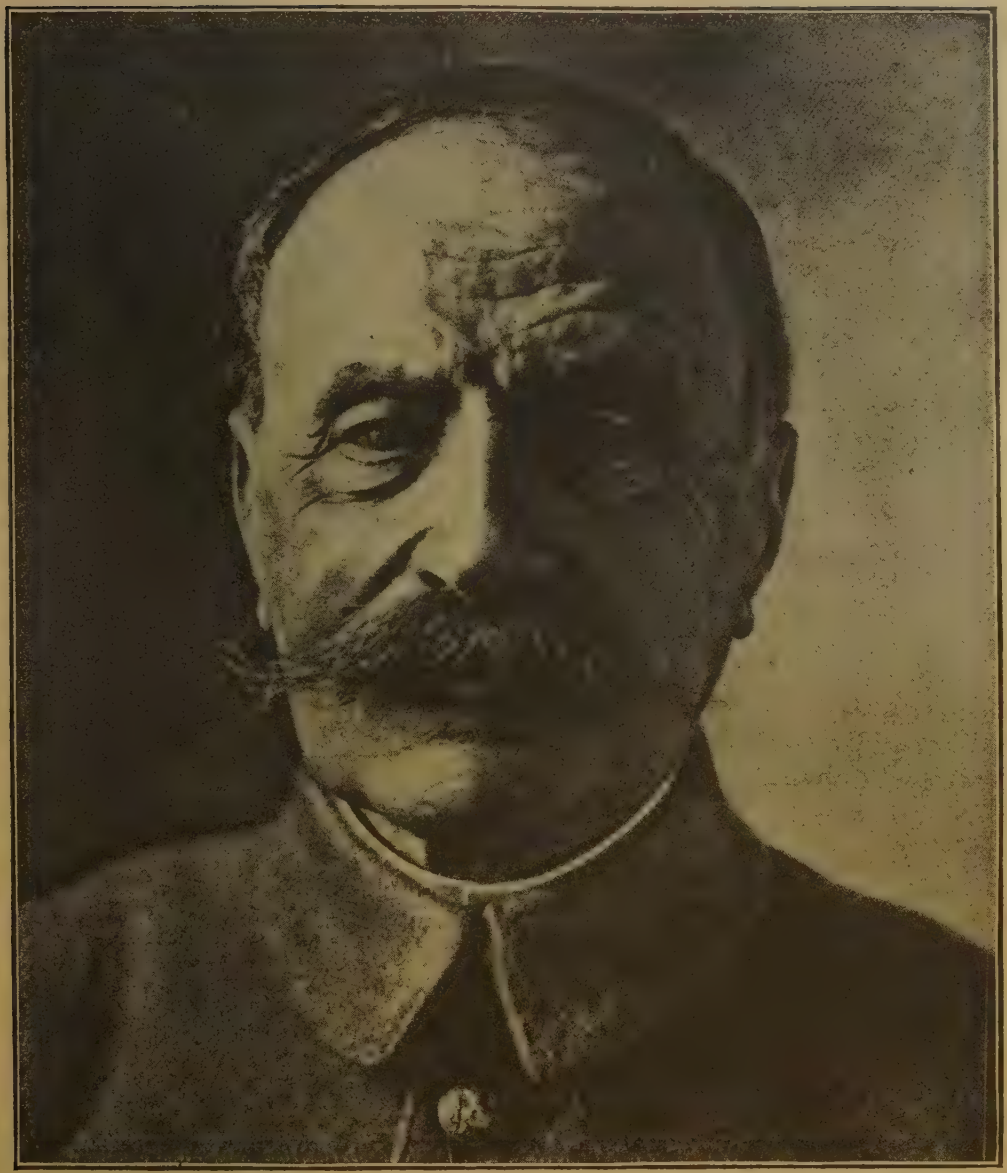
The same calm gravity makes him flee all brilliant and showy functions. On principle, he refuses to attend all those to which he is invited. In his own words, "He hasn't the time. He has to go and work."

With his subordinates he is always affable, but photographers and cinema-men are anathema to him. He dislikes offending or disobliging anyone, but he will not lend himself to publicity. He absolutely refuses to be shown pressing the hands of village mayors, receiving bouquets from little girls, or taking the salute at reviews. As a matter of fact he has no time for reviews. His job is elsewhere, and his saddle-horse is hardly ever mounted, although he loves sport above all things.

In his dress, as in all else, he tries to avoid everything that does not make for simplicity. Fancy or pretty-pretty uniforms irritate him, and, preaching by example, he is nearly always to be seen in the ordinary sky-blue uniform. But for the hardly perceptible little stars, one would take him for a simple soldier.

The few who have had the honour of coming in contact with him tell us that he hardly sleeps at all, that he has no set hours of rest.

At the time of the last offensive towards the Marne and at the time of the offensive against the English he was awake during five days and five nights, his ear bent to the telephone, in constant communication with his generals.



A PRESENT-DAY PORTRAIT OF THE GENERALISSIMO OF THE UNITED ALLIED ARMIES.
Photo. Demay.

His table reflects his mode of life. His are a soldier's meals, eaten quickly and without conversation. As a man of action he possesses a good appetite, but one meat course, a dish of vegetables, and a cup of coffee constitute his daily menu.

Once only, after some hours particularly poignant for France, General Foch, departing from his habitual taciturnity, invited the correspondents of some of the big French newspapers to meet him. He was quartered in an old house of the Louis XVI. period, where he occupied a large room whose furniture was that of a middle-class tradesman. One might well picture a great table overflowing with plans and maps, with notes, with illegible scrawls. Quite wrong! On Foch's table there was an ink-pot, a file, a blotter, and a telephone. Nothing more. Such a table would certainly have seemed far too unimpressive for some second-rate financier 'phoning his orders to 'Change. Yet here the fate of the world was being decided. On the wall hung a great map of the fighting area.

The personality of General Foch is full of charm. One catches in his voice the delightful singing cadences which call to mind his Pyrenean origin. Born at Tarbes, he has retained the stamp

of that rugged highland country where sternness of character is softened by cordiality and simple frankness. He loves that country of pleasant memories. He loves all outdoor pursuits, afoot or astride.

His father, at the time of his birth—sixty-seven years ago—was Secretary-General to the Prefecture at Tarbes. Here, and later at Rodez and St. Etienne, Ferdinand Foch was educated by the Jesuit Fathers.

His mother was the daughter of an officer of the First Empire, whom Napoleon had created a Chevalier after the Spanish war. Grandpapa Dupré was the pride of the family. His campaigns were twice-told tales, and young Ferdinand early developed a deep veneration for that tremendous personage.

He completed his studies at Metz, where he learned to know and love and understand the soul of Lor aine, as it was before the Franco-German War. His sojourn in Metz stamped itself upon his mind. Often he talks of his stay there, of which he does not forget the smallest detail. He was there on the eve of the war—the former war—when he was cramming for the Ecole Polytechnique examinations.

It was said of him in those days that he "was precise as a figure in geometry," and he often recalls this tribute, of which he was very proud, saying that it was his greatest asset. His mind was tinged with the precision of science,

But the student of science was also a lover of military history. He set himself to master thoroughly the lives, ideas, and methods of the great Prussian generals, and he did not hesitate to write some very penetrating and concise criticisms on them. He was a passionate admirer of Napoleon, whose war technique he studied indefatigably.

As the result of these long studies he was able not only to impart his deep knowledge to others when, as a major, in 1896, he was appointed Professor of Strategy and Tactics at the Ecole de Guerre, but has himself written a most important and comprehensive treatise on the art of war.

The instruction which he gavè during five years to his youngest brothers-in-arms is to them for ever unforgettable. Foch's lectures were remarkable for their precision, their originality, and their loftiness of thought. They immediately became classics, and one can see clearly that the young generals of to-day, who were all Foch's pupils at the Ecole de Guerre, still bear the stamp of his teaching. The pick of the school were nicknamed "The School of Field-Marshals."

A book of his which is of the highest order, "The Principles of War," is regarded as an authority.

"*In memoriam, in spem*" ("With hope and in remembrance"). These are the concluding words of this work: words which might be taken as the motto of General Foch's whole life.

This book is perhaps the only one among all the works of its kind written before 1914 which visualized the possibility of the terrible happenings we have seen, and which have revolutionized the art of war. It seems that this man foresaw sensed the coming of the otherwise unsuspected, unheard-of tragedy.

Certain of his teachings are extraordinarily interesting reading at the present time, especially when one thinks that their author is at the head of the Allied Armies. Foch, in minutely studying the military events of 1870, found therein many useful lessons for the future, that future which is now the present

He shows the Germans courting battle, for which they have powerful resources. The French were beaten because *they did not know how to attack;* because they never could make the swift decisions which war demands. The inertia of France in 1870 was the cause of the success of German strategy.

"Had she," he exclaimed, "an idea of the conduct of the battle as a whole? All she knew was the '*Retire,*' and those who commanded divisions, passive, timorous, reluctant to act, sticking to the letter of their orders, always looking behind, had not the qualities of the Prussian generals, their activity, their daring, and the certainty of the support of their comrades."

Foch is the firm partisan of what he calls "the sword-stroke through the heart" or "a club on the head." The decisive attack, he says, is the supreme argument of modern battle; attack prepared with careful judgment and carried out at the right moment. The best method of defence is attack. The weaker one is, the more one should attack. A defensive battle, even when brilliantly conducted, has neither victor nor vanquished. It simply means beginning all over again.

The natural corollary of this is that the offensive, whether it precedes or follows the defensive, can show no result until the last moment. To maintain our positions is not synonymous with being victorious; it is inviting defeat if we stay where we are and do not pass to the offensive. To determine the direction of the attack, to defend ourselves against the plans of the enemy, to prevent him from carrying out an analogous manœuvre we must undertake, carry out, and sustain fresh combats, all with one end in view. But while there can be no doubt the decisive attack, with concerted action, is the touchstone of every battle, all the minor actions which form the battle must be envisaged, considered, organized, and equipped with the maximum of preparation, facility, and security.

Foch writes: "Whatever may be the situation to be resolved in war, there is only one way to avoid mistakes, faults, disasters, or to determine what tactics to exercise on a given day, but that one is sure and certain; the exclusive cult in its best sense and most precise meaning of two abstractions in the moral sphere—duty and discipline.

"To command has never meant to be mysterious; on the contrary, the idea which animates the order should be explained to the immediate subordinate."

"The art of war," he writes again, "does not

consist in a general falling upon the enemy like a wild boar. It is necessary that he should have the hearts and minds of those under him completely subordinated to higher authority. Therefore we must enlighten our subordinates, because blind obedience does not necessarily make for rational and logical execution of the idea conceived by the Generalissimo."

All the theories which he boldly expounded long before the outbreak of war assume a special significance when one reflects that the soldier who conceived and expressed them is to-day the "man of the hour."

All that we have seen of him on the Marne, the Yser, the Somme, and elsewhere is merely concrete proof of the correctness of his teaching.

The admirable tenacity of purpose which is his contributed in no small degree to the victory of the Marne. His army it was, forming the centre, which the enemy tried to break through between Mailly and Sézanne. During three consecutive days he was forced to retire, but each morning he snatched the offensive with such good effect that in the end his obstinacy carried the day, and, profiting by a false move on the enemy's part, he took him in the flank and beat him in his turn. He showed the same tenacity in those critical days of the powerful enemy attacks before Ypres, of which Lord French spoke with the deepest admiration.

It was in such a moment of bitter agony that someone said to him, "There is nothing left but to die."

"No," said Foch; "we must hold on here first. Only then can we afford to die."

General Foch is little seen nowadays. His herculean daily task—heavier than it seems humanly possible for one man to undertake—pins him to his headquarters. In this he is quite different from General Joffre, who went about a great deal. Even when he does go among his troops—for instance, to assure himself of the importance of this or that position—he hardly ever pauses. He dislikes his remarks to be repeated from mouth to mouth among the soldiers. And yet they always are, for there is in them a magic fluid; from end to end of the army they fly, the countersigns of confidence.

"If Foch is with us we're all right," they say.

His relations with the English generals were singularly happy. He has always admired the British Army. He was, perhaps, before the war, the general who knew more of that army than any other. He had been charged with an important military mission in regard to it, and he saw in it all the possibilities of a great living force. He said so boldly, and in the terrible days of the first Battle of the Marne the young English Army proved itself worthy of his confidence.

Let us remember that laconic phrase of his which, better than half-a-dozen speeches, sums up his calm tranquillity; words spoken in the gravely-anxious moments which saw the opening round of the last Great Game:—

"If I had to choose between Hindenburg's cards and my cards, I would choose my own."

Another side of this great man is shown in other words of his:—

"Ah, you do not know what a father suffers when mourning enters into his house permanently. My son is gone and one of my daughters is widowed. I shall return to a house that I left full of happiness on a summer Sunday to find poor wee orphans who never even knew their father. I am nearing the twilight of my life and I think I have been a faithful servant whose hope is to rest in the peace of our Lord. There are, like myself, thousands and thousands of fond old fathers who have lost all they loved, the sons on whom their hope was set. But we have no right to self-pity. Our country — our beloved *patrie*—is all that matters. Let us accept the sacrifice. The whole of humanity is at stake. Liberty must first triumph. Afterwards we may weep."

GENERAL FOCH AS HE APPEARED A FEW YEARS AGO.
Photo. H. Manuel

MYSTERY.

By

"BARTIMEUS."

Illustrated by E. F. Sherie.

I.

DUSK and a fine driving rain were sweeping up harbour from the sea. The shadows that had gathered in the folds of the hills ashore swiftly overflowed and settled down over the muddy town and wharves, engulfing the straggling dockyard. As night fell, lights glimmered here and there on the hillside and were obliterated; across the swift-running ebb-tide the irritable chatter of pneumatic riveters drifted in gusts; and in the direction from which the sound came a few shaded arc-lights shone upon the half-discerned ribs of craft on the building slips.

Something beside the night was coming in from the sea: a ship with a heavy list, labouring in with a tug on either side of her and another fretting at the end of the tow. They passed, a mere smear of uncertain outlines, through the outer defences, and a couple of long black shadows that were the escorting destroyers wheeled again to seaward and were blotted from view.

A number of small craft were afloat in the lower reaches of the harbour. A hospital launch, with the Geneva cross visible through the dusk against her white upper works, lay rolling gently by the berth towards which the tow was heading. Another steam launch circled impatiently round, and in her stern sheets a group of armed Marines stood watching the approaching vessels above the upturned collars of their great-coats. The steaming-light of the hospital boat glimmered momentarily on the barrels of their rifles.

"'Ullo!" said a sickberth attendant in the hospital boat. "Guard o' Marines—eh?"

The sternsheets-man nodded towards the approaching tow-lights. "Prisoners," he said, sententiously, and was silent, watching the shadowy ship looming towards them out of the murk. The tug on the tow slipped the hawser with a blast on her syren and turned shoreward; the splash of an anchor let go and the rattle of cable followed. The coxswain of the hospital boat, as if awaiting a signal, put out his hand towards the telegraph and rang low speed ahead. A light appeared at the gangway of the shadowy ship.

One of the tugs alongside had cast off and was backing astern into the darkness; as she cleared the ship's side a steamboat with her bow lights gleaming through the drizzle like red and green jewels crossed the bows, swept round in a graceful circle, and ran alongside. A rope ladder droppep from the upper deck of the ship and a figure in oilskins, who had been standing in the stern sheets of the steamboat, caught it as it swayed.

"Lay off," he said, curtly, to the coxswain and climbed inboard.

A seaman stood at the gangway holding a lantern above his head, and as the new-comer stepped inboard another figure came forward into the light to greet him. He was a loose-limbed youngish man wearing the cap and monkey-jacket of a Commander. Leather sea-boots reached to his knees, and he dragged his feet as he walked, as if oppressed with a great weariness. He peered at the new-comer through the drizzle for an instant, and then saluted. A grave smile flitted across his face, lit for a moment by the lantern-light.

"Congratulate you!" said the visitor, in quick incisive tones. "Are you all right—wounded?"

"No, sir, not a scratch. Ship's badly knocked about, but she'll float. Dynamo's gone and we've only got lanterns, but you can see——" He nodded forward.

The visitor came a pace or two inboard and stood looking about the upper deck in silence. Figures were moving to and fro with lanterns, and the uncertain light flickered on splintered planking and upper works shattered and distorted by shell-fire. The air was pungent with the sour odour of wet charred wood-work.

"Yes——" said the newcomer, in a low voice, as if speaking to himself. "Yes——" He stared at the riven funnel overhead and thence to the rents in the bulwarks. "Where are your dead?"

"Aft, sir." The Commander led the way past piles of crumpled wreckage, down a ladder and across an open space. A sentry leaning on his rifle at a doorway jerked to attention. "Here are the dead, sir," said the Commander: he stepped through the door and indicated in the flickering lantern-light a row of motionless figures resting beneath a Union Jack.

The other halted and stood in silent contemplation of the shrouded forms outlined dimly amongst the shadows. His chin had sunk on his breast, and for a minute he remained thus motionless. Then, slowly, he turned away.

"The men were absolutely splendid, sir," said the Commander as he led the way forward again. "I—I don't know how to express what I feel about them. This was out and away the worst show we've had, and they were——" the speaker broke off and seemed to swallow something, "magnificent." The inadequacy of the English language seemed to embarrass him. He made a little gesture: "Surgeon was killed, an' I did what I could, but I'm afraid I hurt some of them shockingly. They never winced. It's so hard to find words——"

'There are no words,' said the other, "that meet the case." He paused to measure a shell-hole in the engine-room casing; the clang of metal on metal came up from the silent depths of the ship. "What about your prisoners?"

"The Captain's in my harbour cabin—what's left of it. Pretty sulky customer. The rest are forward under guard. They're more communicative than the last lot and jolly glad to get out of submarines for the rest of the war."

A gust of laughter floated aft from the forecastle and the sound of men's voices singing. A door opened somewhere and the words of the song came plain through the night:—

"When you come to the end of a perfect day."

The Commander smiled as a father smiles on the threshold of his children's nursery. "That's the wounded, sir. First Lieutenant's got the rest forward, working cables." A figure came towards them out of the darkness with bandages glimmering white about his head. He was humming the refrain of the forecastle song and broke off abruptly as he recognised the two figures by the casing.

"The hospital boat is coming alongside now," said the stranger. "I'd like to speak to the wounded before they leave the ship."

"Aye, aye, sir!" The other led the way forward and as they stepped into the dimly-lighted forecastle the singing wavered and died away to a sudden silence. The narrow space was partly blocked by hammocks slung from the beams overhead, and illumined by a few swinging lanterns and candles guttering on the broken mess-tables. Evidences of the ordeal the ship had undergone were apparent on all sides in blackened paintwork and ragged shell-holes in the deck and ship's side. Men sat about smoking and nursing bandaged limbs, or lay motionless with their eyes full of suffering turned towards the new-comers; a few rose unsteadily to their feet, and the stranger motioned them with a gesture to sit down again.

"If England knew," he said, in his clear, deliberate tones, "England could tell you men what she thinks of you. Unfortunately, I am the only person at present that knows." He paused, and surveyed them in the uncertain light, which nevertheless served to illumine the consciousness of victory in each drawn face. "And I'm—proud of you!"

They cheered the spare, upright figure as he stood amid the wreckage and pools of water as only men can cheer who have fought a good fight to a clean finish. As the last gust died away, feet shuffled on the iron plating behind the speaker, and the stretcher-bearers entered. From further aft along the upper deck came a hoarse word of command and the clatter of steel, as the unseen prisoners' escort fixed bayonets. The visitor turned to the Commander and walked slowly aft.

"Now," he said, "I'll have your report."

Half an hour later the visitor departed. At the gangway he paused. "I'll send my barge back for you," he said. "You'll want to get ashore. I sent to tell your wife you were coming in." He smiled his dour smile. "When did you get your last sleep?"

The younger man thought gravely for a moment. "I don't remember, sir. What's to-day? Thursday?" He smiled. "Monday, sir, I think it was. . . . Thanks awfully for the barge, sir. I'll go ashore when I've seen the ship all right for the night."

II.

THE tiny cottage-parlour was flooded with sunshine: through the open window the throaty bubbling song of a thrush poured like a cascade from among the blossoms of an apple-tree that came near to thrusting inquisitive lower branches into the room. The Commander sat at the breakfast-table chipping the top off an egg; opposite him stood a girl, her brows knitted in the preoccupation of coffee-making. At his left hand, perched in a high chair, sat a smaller edition of himself, with a bib under his chin, watching the decapitation of the egg with intent solemnity.

"What did the White Queen say?" asked the Commander.

"'Off wiv his 'ead,'" came the reply, promptly, in rich tones of anticipation.

"'Head,' darling," protested the coffee-maker, without raising her eyes from her task.

"Never mind, John Willie," said his father. "Let's cut the cackle and get to the 'osses." He extended the top of the brown egg to his son and heir, who gravely accepted it and delved into its white and gold with an unwieldly egg-spoon.

'Well?" said his father.

"Fank you," said John Willie, absent-mindedly. He finished the egg's head and passed on to the more serious business of porridge in a blue-and-white bowl. "Can I go to see daddy's ship 'smorning?" he queried, presently. A tiny shadow passed across his mother's eyes and was gone again. For nearly a week she had been able to forget that ship.

She looked at her first-born across the table and smiled. "What d'you want to see?" she asked.

"Blug," said John Willie, calmly.

His father raised his eyebrows. "The deuce you do! How d'you know there's blood there?"

"Cook told Nannie," said the child. "She said ve scuppers must have been full wiv it. What's scuppers?"

"Eat your porridge" retorted his father. "Once upon a time there was a little boy who played with his breakfast——"

"I'll speak to cook," said the mother, in a low voice.

"An' cook said——"

"Never mind what cook said. Just you listen to my story. The little boy's mummie took him to see the White Queen. Know what *she* said?"

"Off wiv——"

A shadow darkened the sunlight and the head and shoulders of the telegraph-girl passed the open window.

"'WHAT DID THE WHITE QUEEN SAY?' ASKED THE COMMANDER. 'OFF WIV HIS 'EAD,' CAME THE REPLY, PROMPTLY, IN RICH TONES OF ANTICIPATION.'

"Hi! Here you are, Janet!" shouted the Commander. He rose up from his chair, thrusting a long arm out of the window and took the orange-hued envelope from the girl's hand. Slowly and deliberately he selected a knife and slit the envelope; there was silence in the little room, and the clock on the mantelpiece punctuated it with even, unhurried ticks. "No answer," he called over his shoulder, refolded the message, and put it in his pocket; then he held out his cup to be replenished.

His wife filled the cup and looked at him across the flowers and china. But her husband had slipped into one of his musing silences, and

sat with knitted brows, drumming his fingers on the white cloth. She knew only too well those imperturbable abstractions, and the futility of asking questions. She was one of those women who had learned to wait as men rarely learn any lesson.

The meal finished and the Commander rose, filling a pipe.

"Lemme strike your match," said his son.

"He'll burn his fingers," said his mother.

"Yes," said the man. "That's the only way he'll ever learn to respect matches." He held out the box: the match was duly struck and the pipe lit without catastrophe. When the pipe was drawing properly he turned and watched his wife's profile as she moved about the homely disorder of the breakfast-table. His eyes were full of a great tenderness.

"Like to run up to town to-morrow?" he said, casually.

She turned swiftly. "London!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Bill! Rather extravagant, isn't it?"

"Um! . . . No, I don't think so. I've got to go—on duty. You'd better come too. It's only for the day. We might lunch somewhere where there's a band—buy a hat, p'r'aps."

"Me, too!" said John Willie.

"Once upon a time," said his father, "I was in a ship where there was a man who said 'Me, too,' every time anyone ordered a drink."

"Was he a firsty man?"

"Very. There were twenty-three people in the mess, consequently he drank twenty-three times more than he ought to.'

"*Ven* what happened?"

"He was attacked by pink rats and blue spiders and piebald snakes."

"Did vey bite him?"

"Something frightful. He never said 'Me, too,' again."

The girl turned from contemplation of the sunlit garden, the tip of her slim forefinger between her teeth as was her habit when deep in thought.

"Bill! Don't be awful! Do you think that grey dress looks nice enough? We needn't go anywhere *really* smart, need we?"

The man put his pipe down on the mantelpiece, and crossing the little room took her face between his hard hands. Three times he kissed her: once on the forehead, once on the mouth, and once on the tip of her pretty nose. "Anything's good enough," he said, and his voice vibrated on a note she rarely heard. Then, abruptly, he released her and turned to his son.

"Now then, John Willie, come on outside! I'm going to bowl to you, and if you don't keep a straight bat you shall never come on board Daddy's ship again."

III.

THE taxi jolted up the cobbled gradient that led out of the gloom of the great terminus, and slipped into the traffic that flowed east and west along the sunlit thoroughfare.

"Oh, look at it all," said the Commander's wife. "What fun, what fun! Why does everybody look as if they were having a holiday, too? Look at the rosettes on the horses' blinkers *and* the flowers—Bill, look at the flowers——" she sighed, luxuriously. "Oh, how nice all these commonplace things are!" Her hand stole inside her husband's. "Can they see us, d'you think?"

"They never used to," replied the man. He watched her animated smiling face as she glanced delightedly about her at the familiar shops and women's frocks and all the gay tide of London setting to and fro. Her eyes softened.

"It's like old times, isn't it," she said. "The pair of us philandering in a taxi—and the tuppences ticking up—are we really going to buy a hat?"

"Not yet," he glanced at his wrist-watch. "No time now. I've got an appointment at twelve."

She gave his hand a little squeeze. "Tell me where we're going."

"I told you. My outfitter."

"I know: but after that."

"Then I've got to—to pay a call. You'll have to wait. Then——"

"Who are you going to call on?"

"A man."

"Anyone I know?"

"Well——" her husband threw back his head and chuckled delightedly. "Not to speak to——"

She shook him by the sleeve. "Don't be silly and mysterious. Is he a naval officer?"

"Er, yes."

"At the Admiralty?"

"Down in that direction." The cab slowed and pulled up. "Wait," he said, and jumping out vanished between the swinging glass doors of the outfitter. A couple of minutes later he returned, carrying a sword and belt, resplendent in gilt and tassel. He stopped on the kerb, gave a low-voiced direction to the driver, and resumed his seat beside her.

"You haven't bought another sword!" she gasped. "You've got one already."

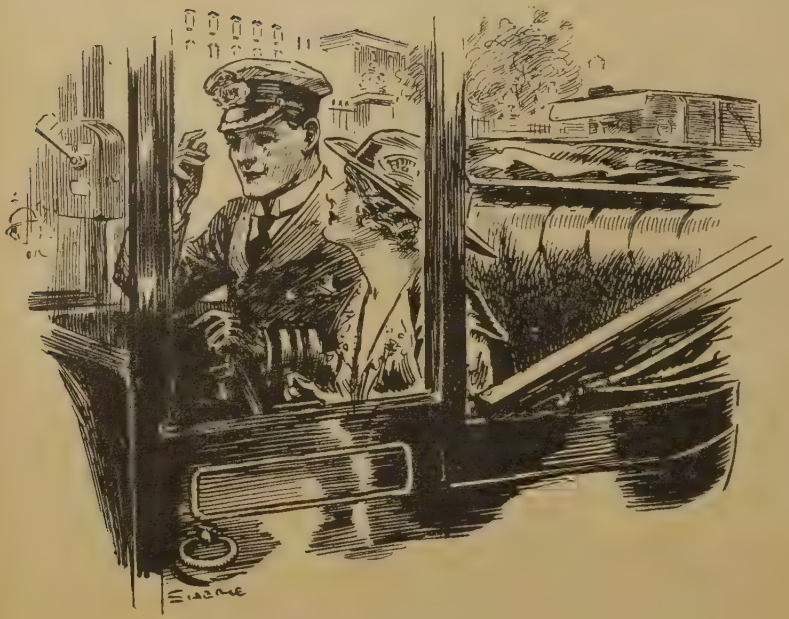
"Olo-piecee—too shabby. I've only borrowed this for the forenoon. You have to wear a sword to pay certain duty calls."

Her ignorance of Service matters was profound, and he had always been content that it should be so. She gave a little sigh, like a child abandoning a puzzle. The car turned into the Mall and the Commander leaned back in his seat adjusting the belt about his lean middle. The girl glanced over her shoulder.

"Why," she exclaimed. "he's going away from the Admiralty! Tell him, Bill, he's going wrong——"

"No, he isn't," said the man. He glanced at his watch. "Pam," he said, and for the second time in her life she thought she detected a note of nervousness in his voice. "Pam, you'll have to sit in the taxi and wait. I shall only be about twenty minutes——"

"Twenty minutes!" she echoed in dismay, and glanced at the taximeter. "But can't I ——" Then the truth suddenly dawned upon



"'OH!' SHE GASPED. 'YOU MIGHT HAVE TOLD ME!'"

her. The broad facade of Buckingham Palace loomed up before them and the car slowed.

"Oh!" she gasped. "You *might* have told me! And one of your cuffs is frayed! That policeman is saluting you, Bill! Oh, my dear, my dear, I think I want to cry!"

"You mustn't cry here," said her husband, fiercely. They had passed into the vast courtyard and had a glimpse of scarlet-coated footmen behind the glass panels of a door. The Commander's wife gulped.

"No," she said, "of course not. But I wish I could come with you."

He gave her hand a quick squeeze and jumped out: as he turned to close the door their eyes met.

"Wait," he said, and passed from her ken.

Outside the railings, drawn up in an inconspicuous spot by the kerb, oblivious to the inexorable ticking of the tuppences, she waited. Nearly half an hour had elapsed before she saw him coming towards her, walking very quickly, holding his head high, rather pale under his sunburn. He gave the driver directions and jumped in beside her. She took a deep breath.

"Oh, my dear—*what?*"

Her husband made no reply, but laid a little morocco leather case on her trembling knees. For a moment she fumbled at it blindly, her head bent low. Then she turned to him, smiling tremulously through a mist of tears, the little bronze symbol lying in the palm of her hand.

"My Man!" she whispered. "My *Man!*"

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 51.
(The Third of the Series.)

A LENGTHY poem, not unknown to fame;
I own I've never read it, all the same.

1. Whatever happens, you must keep it dry:
Damp it, and you will know the reason why.
2. Almost all maidens love the looking-glass,
But through a mirror only one could pass.
3. Endless, without beginning, what is this?
To pigs distasteful, but to women bliss.
4. Here comes a girl, not one of any fame;
But read her backwards, and she is the same.
5. From Italy was this composer sprung:
He'll live as long as operas are sung.
6. A famous dramatist, but neither Rome
Nor Greece nor England gave him his first home.
7. Home of a woman and her progeny,
Close quarters, too, for such a family.
8. Hither assemble bards to celebrate
The glories of a country small yet great.

KING COLE.

Answers to Acrostic No. 51 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2., and must arrive not later than by the first post on September 10th.*

To any or every light one alternative answer may also be sent, and should be written at the side. At the foot of the answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO No. 49.

1.	C	lo	G
2.	O	pheli	A
3.	V	alou	R
4.	E	dwar	D
5.	N	ot	E
6.	T	a	N

ANSWER TO No. 50.

1.	S	as	H
2.	E	ch	O
3.	A	rsena	L
4.	S	em	I
5.	I	slan	D
6.	D	uenn	A
7.	E	nem	Y

The result of the eighth series will be published in next month's number.

"The Earth is Made of Glass."

By L. J. BEESTON.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

"' OMMIT a crime, and the earth is made of glass.'" Bullivant quoted Emerson from memory.

"A platitude prettily dressed," said Reeds, with a shrug. "True only of crimes of passion, of brain-storm. Your deep-planning, patient breaker of laws, your malefactor who commits crime by the book of arithmetic—as Tybalt, prince of cats, used to scratch a man to death—is aware of living in no such transparency."

Bullivant went on: "'Commit a crime, and it seems as if a coat of snow fell on the ground. You cannot recall the spoken word, you cannot wipe out the foot-track, you cannot draw up the ladder so as to leave no inlet or clue. Some damning circumstance always transpires.'"

"And will," agreed Barton. "We see the truth of that in the most elaborately-conceived murder cases."

Reeds persisted: "And why? Because even if the killer has the cold blood of a fish and acts with the logic of a senior wrangler, he yet, in eleven cases out of twelve, sets to his grim work in some conventional fashion that finally gives him away. The will to strike he has; ability to wait and plan may also be his. But that is not enough. He needs imagination, the artistic temperament——"

A laugh broke from the group of men in the club smoking-room.

"A perfectly correct statement, gentlemen," interrupted a quiet voice. "Such a combination, harmoniously applied, will baffle any criminal investigation department in the world."

All eyes sought the man who spoke as if his word was law.

"Be careful, Shasta," laughed Bullivant.

The broad-faced, fat-faced American stared at the other with the keen, hard look of his race. He grunted: "What do you mean, be careful?"

"Why, you speak with the quiet, the assured authority of the man who *knows*."

The other uncrossed his bulky thighs. He leaned forward, looking at his inordinately-long cigar, which he turned round and round with his plump, well-manicured fingers. A continued silence suggested a certain tension in the atmosphere.

"Yes, I know," said Shasta. He leaned back again and regarded his audience through narrowed eyes.

"Let us watch our steps," pushed in Reeds. "Do you mean to affirm, Shasta, that you have personal knowledge of an instance of one who deliberately took a human life after having *absolutely* safeguarded himself against discovery?"

"That is what I did.

"*You?*"

"I."

Reeds pushed back his chair. He looked to right and left, but no one took any notice of him. Shasta bore the intense, focused concentration by stonily staring through the grey drift from his cigar.

"Within five minutes' walk from Leicester Square," said he, with incisive deliberation, "there's an hotel where a visitor was found dead in his room, between three and four years ago. I don't mean to tell you the name of the hotel, and I'll call the visitor just Ferrars. He was murdered. I murdered him. I meant to do it, and I meant to beat the police. I succeeded. I don't mind telling you. If you feel inclined to bring it home to me you won't be able, and, anyhow, I'm going back to the States for good in a week or two."

He flung off the statement with a serene indifference. For a minute he was silent, gathering memories together, then went on, abruptly:—

"In the middle of a strip of garden was an ash, a weeping-ash tree, and in the beds behind the palings mignonette and Virginia stock. Beyond that were the backs of houses. The sound of a beautifully-toned piano came from one of them. Someone was improvising on a song by Compardin. It was a little curious my hearing that song again—then. I had heard it before in an underground den in Montmartre, below a tripe-dresser's shop. I had gone into that hell to watch Ferrars. And now I was watching him again. For the flower-bed was opposite my room in the hotel, and Ferrars's room was next to mine. A wrought-iron balcony was outside my window, and it extended right along that side of the hotel.

"I watched, one by one, the lights in the houses go out. I had switched off mine an hour ago. Glass doors opened on to the balcony, and I sat there, half inside, half outside, smoking and waiting, in the dark. The resonant rumble of the West-end night traffic became fainter and fainter, and a sound to which I had been listening for a long while became more audible.

"It was made by my neighbour pacing up and down in the next room, occasionally pushing chairs about, and muttering to himself in his restlessness.

"The heavy boom of your big Westminster

Copyright, 1913, by L. J. Beeston.

"HE JUMPED UP AND SPUN ROUND WITH A HALF-CRY THAT SHOWED HIS NERVES ALL ON EDGE."

clock droned over the house-tops, and I got up and stepped on to the balcony. Four steps took me outside my neighbour's room. He had his glass door open, too, but the linen blind was pulled right down. I stood there for a minute or two, feeling my mental pulses, making sure of my nerve. The bowed head of the weeping ash rocked in the strong breeze, tossing its streaming hair, and the pianist in the house opposite suddenly commenced that song which begins, 'My love, this is the bitterest, that thou——'

"I pushed the linen blind aside and stepped nto the room.

"A man was sitting there a-straddle on a chair, his arms on the back of it and his forehead on his arms. He did not hear me, and I called out, peremptorily:—

"'Ferrars!'

"He jumped up and spun round with a half-cry that showed his nerves all on edge. He had a sodden white face, a gnawed moustache, dishevelled hair, and a look generally of a man who lives with the devil at his elbow. His lip curled uglily as he saw me.

"'Shasta!' he snapped.

"I turned and closed the Frenchwindows.

"'Look here, you,' he blurted, savagely, 'this is damned unconventional, isn't it?'

"'Most,' I admitted. 'I wanted a private interview with you, and I chose my own way of making sure of it. Of course, you didn't know I was in the hotel. I arrived this afternoon. I came because you are here. I have something very particular to say to you.'

"'Curse me if I see why I should listen to it, though,' he snarled. 'What sort of right——?'

"'Be easy,' I soothed. 'It is quite on the cards that you are entertaining an angel unawares. You welcome me with a curse; you may dismiss me with the reverse of that. I'm not here with empty words. I don't go to any man with such idle things, least of all to you. I've been making inquiries about you, Ferrars. You have about touched the rock-bottom of desperate circumstances. I know all about that, and more—far more than that. As a matter of fact, I have been watching you, more or less, ever since you destroyed the happiness of the one woman for whom I cared. Cared?' The repeated word broke from me without volition,

broke in sweeping storm of agonized memory and derelict love. A white flame passed over my eyes, and Ferrars started back violently, snatching up a chair under the impression I was about to attack him.

"The next moment I was myself again.

"'Put that down,' I commanded. 'I had to hint at that matter, and you know her name. But I shall not mention it, for even the utterance of her name would be soiled by your detested presence. Nor will you speak it, or I'll tear your windpipe out!'

"He sneered: 'Nice language! I knew the shoe pinched you there. You've been watching me, have you? I hope you enjoyed the game. Oh, I'm not afraid of you, Shasta!'

"'That's a lie!' I retorted. 'A man like you is afraid of every decent-spoken, every clean-living, man he meets. Yes, I have kept you in view, though the process was pretty sickening at times. My idea? I was waiting to see justice take you up and rend you. Time and again it seemed to have you, but you always managed to give it the slip. I wanted to see the end of you, if only to prove that God is. Then came the war. You are of an age for military service, and I thought you would escape my observation by being swallowed up in the Army. But you were not found fit. Then I grew tired. This chase of you is eating up my time, taking too much of my life. I decided to push matters. I decided to deal with you myself.'

"Keeping an eye on me, he edged back, sliding out a hand towards the electric bell.

"'I have come to you with an offer,' I continued, taking a chair. 'It is a remarkable proposition; it is a startling one; but I do not think you will decline it. I have learned that your debts certainly total to well over a thousand pounds. Twice that figure is probably nearer the mark. You are ruined, Ferrars. More, I have a shrewd inkling that desperation in these matters has taken you a step too far.'

"He flashed in: 'What do you mean by that, you infernal spy?'

"'We will let the point slide,' I waved him down. 'The whole thing amounts to this—that you would probably sell what is left of your shrivelled soul for a good round sum of money. What would five thousand pounds mean to you just now, Ferrars? Well, I am going to offer you ten thousand.'

"He stared at me just as I thought he would, with dropped jaw and amazed eyes.

"I continued: 'What have you got in that table-drawer? A pistol?'

"As I made a movement to look he thrust the partly-open drawer in with violence.

"'That means, probably, that you have,' I went on, resuming my chair. 'A man doesn't walk about his room at a late hour, muttering to himself, unless he is considerably agitated, and you are more than that. I believe you had a thought of taking a short cut out from your troubles. But you wouldn't have done it. Not yet, at any rate. You are too deep a coward, Ferrars. And yet that you will end that way is quite likely; only that you will put it off too long for me.'

"He blurted with assumed ferocity: 'Come to the point, or get out!'

"'I will come to the point,' I answered him, steadily. 'I offer you ten thousand pounds.

"FERRARS STARTED BACK VIOLENTLY, SNATCHING UP A CHAIR UNDER THE IMPRESSION I WAS ABOUT TO ATTACK HIM."

The largeness of the sum will not surprise you, for I have as many millions—in dollars. But there is a condition attached, as you will readily imagine. Now, watch me carefully.'

"In the middle of the room was a small table, bearing a half-emptied bottle of whisky, a siphon of soda-water, and glasses. I selected two of the glasses—tumblers. Into these I poured soda-water about a third of their length—just the same quantity in each one. From my waistcoat-pocket I drew a folded piece of white paper.

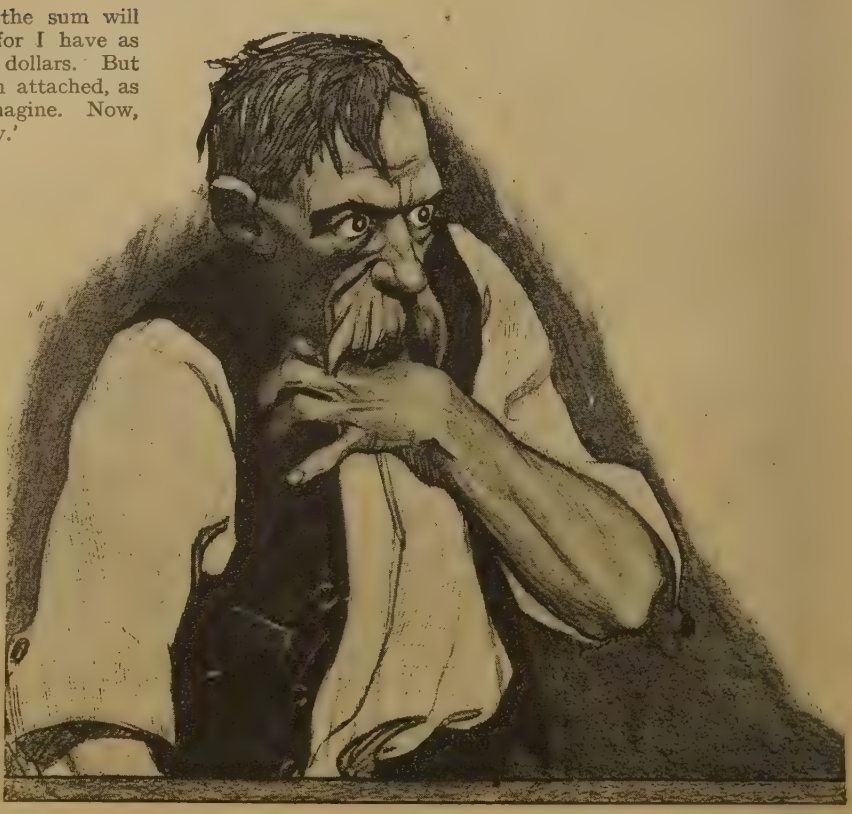
"'Watch me very carefully indeed,' I insisted.

"Into one of the glasses I shook out a very small quantity of the white powder which was in the paper. I then refolded the paper and dropped it into the remains of the fire in the grate. I placed both glasses side by side, and looked at Ferrars, who was regarding me with an expression of mingled stupefaction and fear. I said, speaking with intense deliberation :—

"'One of those glasses contains harmless soda-water: this one. Into the other I have dropped a sufficient quantity of poison to kill three men. At present you know which is which. I suggest that you turn your back upon me while I place both glasses upon the mantelpiece. When you see them again you will not know which contains the harmless fluid, and which holds—death. A death, by the way, which is swift and certain. You will advance, take up which glass you like, and drink off the contents. If you are unlucky in your choice you will know what to expect. On the other hand, if you are fortunate, you will not only survive the ordeal but you shall have the sum I mentioned. You will have life—and ten thousand pounds.'

"A rush of blood streamed over his face, then ebbed suddenly, leaving him frightfully pale. He opened his lips to speak, but seemed incapable of utterance. I went on :—

"'Considering your circumstances, and considering that you have already entertained the most desperate ideas, you will probably conclude that this is a risk worth the running.'



"I TOOK UP THE SECOND GLASS AND DRAINED IT. THE ACTION WAS WORD THAT HE

"He burst out : 'You cold-blooded swine!'

"'Only let me emphasize two points,' I continued, earnestly. 'First, that the unlucky glass is terribly swift in its effects; second, that the circumstances of this adventure will scarcely permit me to stop here, in this room, in a fruitless endeavour to procure you assistance. That would be awkward for me. I do not choose, naturally, that my participation in the affair shall be known.'

"'You hell-hound!' he exclaimed.

"'Names are beside the point,' I reproved. 'The question is—do you accept?'

"'Yes, and while my back is turned you will poison the other glass,' he snarled.

"'You saw me throw away the rest of it.'

"'And you have more on you!' he flashed.

"'You are at liberty to search me thoroughly.'

"He uttered a frightful laugh. 'And what guarantee have I that you will pay up?' he demanded.

"'I can place bank-notes to the value of half the sum on this table—now,' I answered, taking them from a wallet. 'The rest you shall have, I promise you. I have a certain reputation for abiding by my word, which is not unknown to you. Oh, you shall be fully paid. Have no fear in that regard.'

ELOQUENT ENOUGH; THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ME TO TELL HIM BY WAS DOOMED."

"He went up to the glasses and stared into them a long while without speaking a word.

"'Ten thousand pounds,' I repeated.

"He looked at me sideways in a queer fashion. In his throat a pulse was beating wildly. 'I owe more money than you think,' he muttered, uneasily. 'Then I have to get out of a certain scrape at which you hinted. I shouldn't be so well off, even if I had the luck of the thing.'

"'Fifteen thousand pounds,' I answered.

"He drew a long, a deep breath. I felt sure he would accept if he could screw up his nerve to it. He had the will to make that fling of the dice if he could make it before his remains of pluck ebbed from his finger-ends. He would have been wise to have acted promptly. As it was, sheer funk began to sweat out from his palms and pallid forehead. He wiped them and took a turn up and down the carpet. His voice, with a strained, a high-pitched note, called to me: 'You can place the glasses as you said, but that doesn't bind me to act, mind you.'

"'Of course not,' I answered, coolly. He had stopped at the door-corner of the room, staring at the varnished panels. I took up the glasses and set them upon the mantelpiece. I called out: 'It is all arranged.'

"He turned on his heel, advanced three paces, and stood looking at the tumblers just as he might have regarded the levelled barrel of a duellist's pistol. For a moment his eyes left them to seek mine; then he came straight forward, lifted one of the glasses, and put the edge to his lips. I heard it click against his teeth in his trembling grasp. He threw back his head and tossed off the liquid at a single gulp. He threw the glass aside and looked at me—seeking my verdict. I admit that the expression in his eyes haunted me for long afterwards. It seemed to me that his dilated pupils blazed with a wild light. My answer was prompt. I took up the second glass and drained it. The action was eloquent enough; there was no need for me to tell him by word that he was doomed.

"Still he kept his eyes fixed on mine. For a matter of ten or twelve seconds he balanced himself with difficulty, swaying from side to side. I leaped forward to catch him, but I was too late. He went over sideways, dragging the cover from the table in his dying grip."

The narrator paused. There was a sensation amongst his audience which made him quickly continue:—

"Understand, gentlemen, this man I called Ferrars was one of those degenerates who are not fit to live. The very crust of the scum of the earth."

No one answered him; no one spoke.

"And if you knew of the wrong he had done to the best woman in the world—— But you won't know. I am going to keep that to myself."

At this point Reeds broke in. "But, see here, Shasta," he urged, agitatedly; "this is no clear case of killing. It isn't precisely what—what we were talking about. It seems to me that Ferrars did himself in. It was more in the nature of a duel. You gave him a chance."

"There's a point I have yet to mention," answered Shasta, gratingly, harshly. "I said that Ferrars was found unfit for military service. I found out why. He had advanced valvular disease of the heart. His own doctor told me he was living on the edge of a precipice. God judge me for it—I pushed him over. One of those glasses contained pure soda-water; the other, soda-water—and a grain of common chalk!"

MIND-PICTURES.

A Simple Way of Acquiring a Splendid Memory.

By DAVID DEVANT.

Illustrated by G. Henry Evison.

TO remember a list of thirty articles, compiled and read out by my audience, has been one of the "tricks" in my repertoire for many years. This "memory feat," as it has come to be called, usually excites far more wonder than any trick or illusion I present; yet there is no "trick" about it. The feat is exactly what I describe it to be—a feat of memory.

The idea of including this feat of memory in a series of conjuring tricks is mine. I saw a professor of memory doing it in Vienna many years ago, and thought what a good thing it would be for my performance. I went home, learned how to do it, and had the pleasure of being the first entertainer to present it in this country.

To an audience it seems particularly marvellous, but the secret of "how it is done," like the secret of every very good trick, is quite simple. Anyone possessed of a brain that works fairly quickly can do it with a little practice.

All that the performer has to do is to form a series of mental pictures. A part of each picture is already in his mind, placed there in a way which I will explain presently. The rest of the picture is completed by the audience.

To begin with, the performer must think of some person, place, or thing which is to represent each number from one to thirty. It is not difficult to do this. The best list is the one which the performer compiles for himself, because he will probably remember it with very little effort. However, since I am writing for amateur performers, I will give a few hints on making a suitable list.

Number one. A man who thinks too much of "Number One" is a man who thinks too much of himself. Let "one" stand for yourself.

Number two. If you think of the saying "Two's company," etc., then number two will always suggest in your mind a picture of a young couple.

Number three. The entrance to a pawnbroker's shop, with the familiar sign of the three brass balls over it, suggests the mind-picture for number three.

Number four. A square has four sides. Let any square in your neighbourhood stand for four.

Number five. This suggests a "Nap hand." Form a mental picture of players at the card-table, with one man winning "Nap," and you will always remember five.

Continue making out your list in this way until you have a mental picture for each number. It does not matter what the pictures are so long as you can remember them easily and can call up each one before your mental vision directly you hear the number named. The suggestions I have given may not appeal to you; in that case make others for yourself. However, just to give you a few more hints I may say that "seven" always suggests a river to me (because of the river Severn); "ten" is the tent in my garden; "twelve" stands for a picture of the twelve apostles; "thirteen," being the unlucky number, stands for a horse-shoe; when anyone says "seventeen" to me I think of a young girl (you must have heard of "sweet seventeen"), and so on.

Perhaps twenty-five of these mental pictures will be enough for you, an amateur, to start with. Having mastered the list, you have the material you require for the performance.

Your audience make out a list of twenty-five articles and put a number to each article. The list is read out to you once. Directly each thing is numbered and named you immediately connect it in your mind with the picture corresponding to that number, and thus you complete the mind-picture. I can assure you that the mental picture you thus form will not fade from your memory for some considerable time.

1.

For example, suppose the list is begun with "Number one—A pound of sausages." You immediately recall to your mind that number one is yourself, and therefore when the pound of sausages is read out for "one" on the list you form a mental picture of yourself sitting down to a meal of a pound of sausages. The thing can be done in a second. When the whole list is read out and you are ready to repeat each article written down by the audience you will have no difficulty, when you begin, in thinking of "Number one—A pound of sausages." The mental picture you formed of yourself trying to eat a whole pound of sausages will do the trick for you. (1.)

2.

Number two in your stock of mental pictures is a young couple. Suppose that number two in the list made out by your audience is "A cure for indigestion." You immediately compose a mental picture of a gallant young man offering a beautiful young lady a bumper of any of the well-known "cures for indigestion," and that mind-picture will stay with you. You can put it away at once and go on to number three, and rest assured that when anyone asks you afterwards, "What is number two?" your mind will recall the picture of the young man trying to dose the young lady with a patent medicine, and you will reply, "A cure for indigestion." (2.)

Number three in our stock of mental pictures is a pawnbroker's shop. We will suppose that the audience have written against number three in their list "An elephant." It is an easy matter to picture to yourself an elephant trying to squeeze his way into a pawnbroker's shop, and thus, when you have to repeat the list written down and called out by the audience, you will have no difficulty in remembering what number three was. (3.)

4.

Number four in my list of suggestions for mental pictures was a square. This is a particularly good mental picture—a clear open space of grass. No matter what number four in the audience's list is, you can easily picture it standing in the centre of the square. A lady, thinking to give me something very difficult for number four, once wrote down, "A copper with the fire alight and the copper full of washing." It was quite an easy matter to form a mind-picture of the copper standing, all alone, in the centre of Regent's Park (near which I was then living). (4.) As you see, I have never forgotten it, although I have done the memory-feat hundreds of times since then.

5.

The more the audience try to bother you by writing down rare things or absurd things, the easier your task of remembering; but to the audience the feat will seem almost miraculous.

Number five in our suggestions for a stock of

mental pictures is a man winning "Nap." Suppose that the audience call out, "Number five—A garden hose." You immediately think of a small boy playing with the garden hose and turning it into the window of the room in which the card-players are seated. You thus have your mind-picture for number five. (5.)

Number eight always suggests a piano to me, the octave being eight notes. If someone writes down, "Number eight—A cow," you at once think of a cow sitting down in front of your piano and putting its fore feet on the keys. (8.) The necessary mind-picture is made at once.

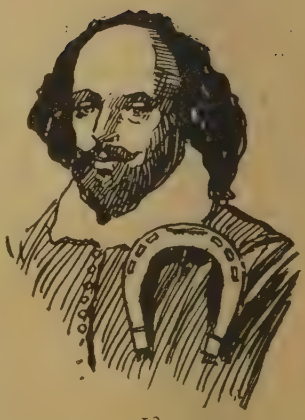
8.

I have suggested that number ten should be represented by "tent" in your mind—easily remembered. Let the audience write down what they will for number ten and you can easily connect it with a tent and form a mind-picture. When performing to soldiers I nearly always have "a suit of civvies" (civilian clothes) given to me for at least one number. If it is given for number ten, you can easily imagine a suit of clothes hung on the outside of a tent. (10.) In the same way number thirteen is a horseshoe. Suppose that the audience call out, "Number thirteen—A volume of Shakespeare." An easy way of remembering this would be to form a

10.

mind-picture of Shakespeare with an enormous horseshoe pin stuck into his coat. (13.)

The more fantastic and absurd your mind-pictures, the more easily you will retain them in your memory. For example, number seventeen is a young girl. If the audience have written down "butter" against their number seventeen you can form a mind-picture of a young girl eating a piece of bread and butter; but you will get a much better mind-picture if you think of a young girl who has had a pat of butter thrown at her eye by her young brother. (17.)



13.

Now, we will suppose that the audience have called out their list of articles to you. You impress upon them the fact that you have heard the things only once. You then ask the audience to look at their list, and you recite the whole of it. Each mind-picture you have formed will be recalled by you directly you want it. I know that this seems incredible, but I can assure you that you can safely trust your brain to do the marvellous work for you. If you have formed your mind-pictures correctly the result will be that you can remember the whole list of twenty-five articles after you have heard them read out to you once. Moreover, it does not matter what order you say them in, for each mind-picture is independent of the others. It looks very difficult to offer to say them backwards, beginning at twenty-five, but it is just as easy to recall them in that order as

17.

in the right order. Your mental effort ceases after you have formed each mind-picture.

Another point. You can safely offer to remember the list when it is read out in any order. The audience need not begin with number one or finish with twenty-five. You can let them dodge you about in any way they please, and then you can repeat the list in the right order. This looks very difficult, but it is not.

Another point. If the audience do read the list in irregular order, it is quite likely that, by accident or design, they will leave out a couple of numbers. You, having no mind-pictures for those numbers, can tell at once what numbers have been omitted, and you name them. You

then get the credit for being extremely alert; in fact, much cleverer than you really are!

By adapting this home-made system of memory you can easily remember the order of twenty-five cards after you have seen them dealt slowly on the table. Having got your stock of mind-pictures for each number from one to twenty-five, you then have to prepare a mind-picture for each card in the pack, and you have to remember all of them. One way of preparing such a list is by letting all the cards of the hearts suit stand for things in a butcher's shop. The ace can be a bullock's heart; the two of hearts can be the cashier flirting with the salesman; the three of hearts can be a "block ornament" (the sort of thing that a poor woman who has pawned something would naturally buy); the four of hearts can be a steak (a "square" meal); and so on, until you get to the knave of hearts, which may be represented by the mind-picture of a wily butcher putting a piece of fat on the under-side of his scale. For the queen of hearts and king of hearts you can leave the butcher's shop and go, naturally enough, to Buckingham Palace.

In the same way you can form mind-pictures of the other suits. For clubs you go to any club and make up mind-pictures from things seen in it. A jeweller's shop will help you in the same way with diamonds, and a garden will do the trick for you with spades.

This list of fifty-two things, one for each card, must be memorized perfectly, and the list you compose for yourself will be the one you can remember most easily.

Now, the twenty-five cards are dealt slowly on the table, and as each one is put down you form a mind-picture composed of the "number-picture" and the mind-picture representing the card. For example, number one is yourself. If the first card is the two of hearts, you at once imagine yourself interrupting a flirtation between your butcher and his cashier in the desk. You will have no difficulty in remembering afterwards that the first card was the two of hearts.

On paper this may seem to be very complicated, but in practice it is quite simple. In the old days, at the Egyptian Hall, I used to have a pack of cards dealt out, face downwards, in four rows on a large board resting on an easel. Of course, while they were dealt out I used to remember the order of the pack. Then I would get someone from the audience to alter the positions of cards, and finish up by asking him to turn the cards over, when the audience saw that they were arranged numerically and in their suits. I soon gave this up as being too slow for an ordinary audience. The "memory feat," as I have described it, always provides plenty of fun in any audience. People are always amused by the list made and read out by the audience. I used to have my list made on cards, which I threw out to the audience—thirty of them, with a number on each card. After a time I found I was suspected of doing the trick by having the list whispered to me by someone in the wings, who was supposed to write down the things as the audience called them out. I was also suspected of doing the trick by having a large slate, with each thing written on it, pushed up from beneath the stage just behind the footlights. To meet these objections I did the feat on the "run down," the little platform with steps to it leading from the auditorium to the stage.

My memory feat has been of great assistance to me in private life. I can assure any man that, once he has compiled and memorized his list of mind-pictures for the numbers one to twenty-five, such a simple thing as his wife's shopping list will have no terrors for him—at least, so far as remembering the list goes! As for my friends' telephone numbers, I simply cannot forget them. For example, if some man tells me that his number is 1385, I have only to think of myself going into a pawnbroker's shop to pawn my piano and finding the pawnbroker sitting down behind the counter playing a game of cards—and the thing is done! That mind-picture remains with me and is instantly recalled directly I want it. Indeed, the great difficulty with me is to forget. When I was performing twice a day at the Egyptian Hall, with private performances in between, I often did the memory feat three times in one day, and I occasionally found that my mind-pictures at the third attempt were blurred by the memory of the first two sets. But this difficulty is not likely to occur to any amateur conjurer, who is seldom asked to do the feat more than once a day.

NEXT MONTH.

THE

BATTLE OF ARRAS

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

Described in detail for the first time.

THE FACTS AT LAST!

The Lilac Ribbon

by Lynn Doyle

Illustrated by F. Gillett, R.I.

I.

PLOUGHING is no longer the skilled occupation it used to be. The modern chill-plough demands neither knowledge nor strength. Its guiding-wheel measures off the furrow with a monotonous accuracy, and controls the depth of it to a fraction of an inch. Your chill-ploughed field is a depressing prospect of mechanical regularity. The personal touch is wanting. You may drive through Co. Down the whole of a spring day, and think the same ploughman has turned over every furrow you see. It was different in the days of the old swing-plough. Then a man could mark his individuality as clearly with the plough as with the pen. There was character in ploughing. The expert could recognize at a glance the style of any ploughman in his neighbourhood. Of any acknowledged craftsman, that is; the undistinguished mass of botchers merely turned over the earth; they could not be said to plough. But the style of the masters was unmistakable. The respective furrows of Tom Lennon and William Brown were no more to be confounded than is the blank verse of Shakespeare with that of Milton. Tom Lennons and William Browns there may still be among us, potential ploughmen great even as their fathers; but their gift will never be revealed to them. A mechanical age has deprived them of their birthright. They are doomed to an accomplishment of flat mediocrity, and will go down to the grave without their meed of fame.

It is true that ease has come to man and horse. The poet can no longer write of the "swinkt" ploughman; "steaming" is no longer the fit adjective for his yoke. The straining horses no longer vivify the landscape with energy embodied; they have sunk to mere prettiness as they amble across lea or stubble scarce heeding the trivial machine behind. Then, to guide the old swing-plough was a strong man's job. Every faculty was at strain during the arduous voyage from hedge to hedge. The instinctive eye might measure the due line, but every trick of horse-craft, every effort of muscle was needed to counteract the hundred influences that contended against a straight furrow. Nor was the struggle conducted in silence. From the moment when his sock-point entered the soil until he emerged sweating on the opposite head-rig the ploughman's voice never failed in a stream of admonishing, reproof, or encouragement to his striving team. "Get along, Johnny, get along with you—steady, Dobbin, steady!—good horses, good horses"—mingled with the technical ejaculations: "Hup, hup, wind, wind," as the team turned towards the furrow or away from it; and all the time the ploughman's earth-clogged feet sought purchase on the uneven ground, and his hands gripped tense on the shafts of his rocking plough. It cannot be denied that ease has come to the ploughman also.

But while to his horses the change is perhaps all gain, the ploughman himself has paid a heavy price for it. He has lost interest in his calling since it was degraded to the mere mechanical. He no longer discusses his craft with his fellow-artists at a four-roads or over a cottage-fire, or walks five miles on a Sunday, as I have known William Brown do, to view and criticize the accomplishment of a rival. No man is

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proud of his ploughing nowadays, or envies another's.

There is worse to come. One glory at least has survived the coming of the chill-plough—the birds. The long line of rooks still stretches from the ploughman's heels, as if he were ploughing birds out of the earth; the scolding seagulls still hover above the new-made furrow, a dazzle of beating wings. I loved the spring ploughing, and "mitched" from school many a spring day to follow the plough. I saw my Mother Earth in the rich brown tilth as never in other aspects. In autumn I forgot the giver in the plenteousness of the gift. Then, too, I loved the great cotton-wool clouds, a little soiled on the under surface in the early weeks, but bleaching to white purity as the season advanced; I loved the gleam of sunlight on wet tree-bole in the bordering copse; and rejoiced to mark the cold grey field-pools warm to azure. But most of all I loved the following birds whose tireless energy of beak and wing mocked man's sedater bread-winning. I delighted in the clamour of their unending squabble for existence, the petulant scream of the seagull, the deeper expostulation of the rook, the jostlings for some fat worm, the preoccupied leap-frog, half vault, half flutter, as each bird strove to approach nearer to the ploughman's heels. My eye joyed in the metallic iridescence of blues and greens on a rook's back as he stalked from furrow to furrow with an embarrassed gravity, as if a bishop should walk on stilts, or the delicate poise of an alighting gull with upstretched fluttering wings and tentative feet. I lay aside my brief against the chill-plough. We are threatened by a greater evil. The motor-tractor is at our gates, noisy and noisome, and the ploughman's birds will soon follow him no more.

I mean well by William Brown when I hope he has been delivered from the evil of tractors to come. And if he has passed to a happier world, killed as I have little doubt by the chill-plough, I trust that, in another sense of the word, there is husbandry in heaven. For William was a ploughman incarnate. Every impulse of his soul strove towards perfection in his craft; all else was trivial to him; as truly as he ploughed to live he lived but to plough. He used to say he would wish to die between the shafts; but surely not that he might be transported to some region of ploughless bliss.

It is no sarcasm to say that William did my uncle the honour of becoming his first ploughman for several years; for it was in William's power to confer honour on his master. The fame of his ploughing spread over two baronies. At ploughing matches he towered above farmers of a hundred acres and more. I used to trot at his heels at these festivals, partaker of his glory, and drank in the respectful asides of bystanders that "there was William Brown, Mr. W——'s man." Our sideboard glittered with cups of William's winning, for in those feudal days the master reaped where the man had strewn. Legends sprang up about his ploughing. He could juggle with his plough, men averred. The topmost ridge of his furrow—the "combing," as it was technically known—was said to be so sharp that it cut the feet of alighting birds; and I am willing to believe it, though I cannot say I ever observed the phenomenon myself.

It is sad to think that such a ploughman should have died and left the world no copy; yet so it was. But it has been the fate of the great artist in all ages; the one master-passion occupies his soul to the exclusion of lesser affections; he must plough his lonely furrow. Perhaps it is better so. No son of William Brown's begetting could have driven a motor-tractor gladly.

II.

Yet love knocked at William's heart once, and gained a partial entrance. Our servant-maid, Kate Keenan, wrought the mischief, a tall slip of a girl, scarce twenty, with dancing dark eyes, and a mass of purple-black hair always threatening to tumble down her back. There was a wild strain in Kate. She worked singing, idling by starts, then swooping at her task with a whirlwind rush that accomplished wonders in a marvellously short time, but was very severe on delf. She was given to cheap finery, and became the prey of every pedlar that unrolled his wares in our kitchen. In the most pressing necessity of stockings she would lay out her last coin on a showy hat. I have known her buy a diamond brooch—pedlar's diamonds—and black-lead her heels till the next month's wages fell due. And she was the only girl I ever saw play the jew's harp. Why stolid William Brown should become the sport of such a Venus it is hard to say; but before she had been with us a fortnight it was observed that he was lingering portentously over his evening porridge, and that his subsequent pipe was smoked by the kitchen fire instead of in the stable. He was never known to say anything to Kate during these sittings, and his intentions were in doubt for some weeks, till one evening he suddenly asked her if she would step as far as the top of the Whinny Hill with him before bed-time. There was great excitement in the farmstead over this unexpected move of William's, and the progress of the couple was watched by half-a-dozen pairs of eyes from various places of concealment, my aunt, to preserve her dignity, peering out of an upstairs bedroom window. I had become fairly skilled in such matters by this time of my life, and was a good deal disappointed to perceive on Kate's return that her hair was no more disordered than usual, which I thought a bad sign. I was not sufficiently intimate with Kate to question her on the subject, for she was a kindly soul, very fond of children, and prone to gusts of affection involving hugs and kissing, which caused me to hold her more aloof than any of our other maids. But my aunt could not contain her curiosity, and asked Kate if William had said anything. Kate told her he had not said anything either going or coming, but that passing through the haggard

on the way back he had tried to put his arm round her, and she didn't permit him, because she thought there should be some conversation first. But William walked to the top of the Whinny Hill with Kate several times during the following week, and towards the end of the week had found his tongue a little, it would seem, for our yard-boy lay behind a hedge as

I liked Kate very well, but she was too young and flighty for my taste, which at that time ran to the sober and mature among womenkind; and I felt that if William knew as much about her as I did he would very likely be of my opinion. I could see quite plainly he knew little about the real Kate, for she was always very demure when he was in the kitchen:

"KATE WAS FLATTERED BY HIS ATTENTIONS."

they passed one evening, and heard him tell Kate that he had money saved. After this report got about, as the yard-boy took very good care it should, it was taken for granted on the farm that William and Kate would shortly be married.

I think it might have come to marrying between them, for William was a personable man, tall, fair-haired, and ruddy-cheeked, and though he was staid beyond his years, he was a good-natured, likeable fellow. Then Kate was flattered by his attentions. He was a rising man. Already he received five pounds a year more than any ploughman in the district, and it was known that he was well into his second hundred of savings towards buying a farm. Besides, he had never been known to pay court to anyone before, and that in itself was a feather in Kate's cap.

I wasn't quite satisfied on William's account. I admired him and looked up to him as to a man gifted above ordinary ploughmen; and I was by no means sure that he wasn't being taken in.

and thought at times it was my duty to enlighten him. In particular it was on my conscience that he should be told about the jew's harp. But when I hinted my scruples to my aunt she was greatly disturbed, and told me that I must never interfere between lovers. It was a very wicked thing to do, she said, and no good ever came of it. I had never seen my aunt so moved before. All the same, she added, she would believe in the wedding when she saw it.

But William the ploughman stood greatly in the way of William the lover, and in the end proved the undoing of him altogether. It came about in this manner: Like all good ploughmen, William was attached to his horses, and took great pride in their appearance. No better groomed or glossier pair than William's ever stepped before a plough. Their meals and toilet were his charge alone. He would allow no meaner hand to minister to them. Above all his charges he was attached to our bay mare Betty. She was worthy of his love, a handsome, docile creature, light for a plough-horse, but of a great heart. I have heard William say in

an unwonted outburst of feeling that if he had Betty in the lead he could plough with a Newfoundland dog in the furrow. Nearly all his spare time went to burnishing her beautiful coat—a great deal more of it indeed than Kate approved of. I have seen Kate many a night stalking up and down the yard, stormy-faced, while William lingered in the stable to bestow a supererogatory touch of the curry-comb on her rival.

But William went his pre-occupied way unconscious of her rising indignation. The great spring ploughing-match was at hand. His name was inscribed twice in succession on the H—— Cup; and three successive victories won it outright. That ploughing match was to be William's Philippi, had he but known it. Yet Fate did her best for him, or perhaps it was the humbler divinity of Common-sense. He invited Kate to accompany him to the field and partake of the triumph of which none of us stood in any doubt. Such a joint expedition was tantamount to a public betrothal. Every grievance vanished from Kate's volatile mind at the prospect of parading her new dignity before the notables of the countryside. In a nightly canvass of her finery she forgot William nearly as completely as William in his dream of fame forgot her.

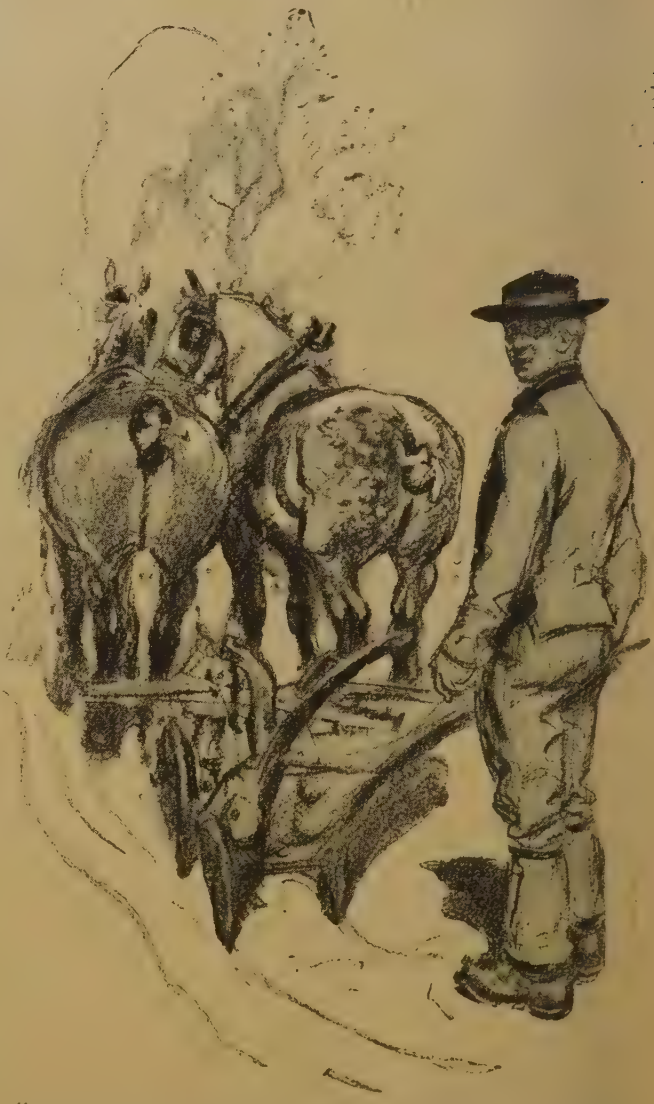
To crown all her good-fortune, a pedlar visited our house on the eve of the great day. I remember Kate's sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks as she tried on one gew-gaw after another, a Marguerite of the kitchen. My aunt caught the infection in the end, and became nearly as excited as Kate. I think we all went a little mad that night. I know my aunt allowed Kate to mortgage two full months' wages; and I, infected with Kate's recklessness, broke open my money-box, and bought myself a four-bladed knife.

Only one treasure remained for Kate to covet, a matter of half-a-dozen yards of lilac ribbon, discovered when she had sunk far below bankruptcy. In vain Kate tried the effect of it in her hair, and on her bosom, and against her neck. In vain the pedlar dangled it. My aunt hardened her heart, not indeed before it was time; and the lilac ribbon disappeared into the pack again. When the pedlar had gone we spread the new finery on the kitchen table, and began to turn it over half-heartedly. There was something wanting, and we all knew it. We had sold the spirit of delight for half-a-dozen yards of lilac ribbon. Presently Kate bundled up her purchases and went off with them to her room. There was something disconsolate in her air. My aunt stood looking

"ONLY ONE TREASURE REMAINED FOR KATE TO COVET, A MATTER OF HALF-A-DOZEN YARDS OF LILAC RIBBON."

after her a moment, then drew out her purse and handed me half-a-crown, remarking acidly that she was an old fool. I needed no further hint, but took to my heels. When I reached our farmyard gate to my surprise the pedlar was just passing out through it. I told him I wished to buy the lilac ribbon. He answered that he was sorry, but he had sold it to one of the men-servants. When I questioned him I found it was to William Brown, and ran hastily back to the kitchen with the news. My aunt and Kate looked at each other for a moment. "Oh, mem," said Kate; that was all; but I wish William could have heard her. My aunt declared to her goodness she didn't think William had it in him, and straightway hunted me off to bed.

I was very much disappointed and chagrined and fought off sleep till my aunt's footsteps sounded on the stair. But when I asked her if William had brought the ribbon to Kate she gave me no satisfaction, demanding quite sharply why I wasn't asleep hours ago, from which I concluded that he hadn't yet given Kate the ribbon. I had a dismal certainty that I should sleep late the next morning and miss the giving of the ribbon; and I knew from old experience that on a morning of any special activity no one would awaken me, so that I should be out of the way. And of course I did sleep late, so late that when I arrived downstairs it was almost time for William and Kate to start for the ploughing-match. Kate was dressed ready to go out; but when I looked for the ribbon it was nowhere to be seen; and when I began to question my aunt about it she was even shorter with me than the night before.



"WILLIAM BROWN WAS STANDING BETWEEN THE HANDLES OF HIS PLOUGH, LOOKING BACK TOWARDS THE KITCHEN DOOR IN BEWILDERMENT."

Nine o'clock struck, the hour at which William and Kate were to leave; and there was no word of the ribbon. By this time Kate was half-crying, half-furious, and my aunt's attitude towards an inquisitive little boy was fairly insufferable. At last a knock came to the kitchen door. It was only the yard-boy to say William was ready. "You may go, Kate," said my aunt, declaring bitterly to her goodness and patience that men were bigger fools than she thought. Neither she nor I followed Kate out of the kitchen.

It scarcely seemed a moment till the door opened again, and Kate flung in, scarlet-faced and sobbing. She did not answer my aunt's startled inquiry, but began to take off her hat. I could see that her hands were trembling. All at once she flopped down on a chair, and laughed and laughed.

"Oh, mem," she said, "go and look!"

My aunt and I ran out. William Brown was standing between the handles of his plough, looking back towards the kitchen door in bewilderment. My gaze travelled to his team. The bay mare's mane and tail were neatly plaited with lilac ribbon.

Kate married Dick Murray, a former second ploughman of ours, who took service again in our neighbourhood about then. I was reminded of this story by looking at the H—— Cup not long ago, and seeing William Brown's name inscribed on it three years in succession.

ALL ABOUT LOVE.

BY SOME OF OUR MOST FAMOUS NOVELISTS.

Here is another Confession Book. We have asked some of the best-known writers of love stories — who are experts in matters of the heart — to fill in the answers to the seven questions set out below.

HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

Generally, a woman's, because love means more to her, and takes up a greater portion of her thoughts.

2. Should a woman show her love?

I believe that love begets love. The world is full of middle-aged and elderly women who are leading lonely, soured lives, because, at some crisis, great or small, in their youth, they hid their feelings from the man they loved, out of modesty, pique, pride, or shyness.

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

Undoubtedly. Polygamists have assured us solemnly of the fact. The late Brigham Young may be cited as an example. I can remember a man who was held to be a devoted husband by two women, between whom he divided scrupulously his time, his money, and his affections. Each woman discovered the existence of the other after the death of the man; and each testified to the love that he had inspired in her.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

Certainly. A famous General met his wife in the morning, married her that evening, and lived happily with her; each was devoted to the other. Probably this mutual passion is excited even more frequently than is commonly supposed.

5. Are love marriages the best?

Emphatically. A loveless marriage at its best can only be described as a business partnership.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

Is any woman plain to the man who loves her? Ugly women have inspired adoration time and time again.

7. Can any love last for ever?

This is a hard nut to crack. It cannot be answered absolutely by finite man. Let us hope that love, in its imperishable essence, does bloom eternally. Spiritualists affirm this to be true.

Horace Annesley Vachell

AUSTIN PHILIPS.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

There are all sorts of men and all sorts of women, and there can, therefore, be no Median rule in the matter; but in the main woman's love is stronger because her love is born more of her emotions than of her brain. Therefore, when miserably mated, or about to be (provided that she loves truly), she will hold on stoutly where a man would switch off fearfully, and, regardless of probable suffering, she will take tremendous risks.

2. Should a woman show her love?

To show her love to one man might be madness; to another it might be wise to indicate a preference; in the case of a third, to let him see that she cared for him—or, at least, *could* care for him—might be the only way to secure the happiness of two lives. Surely she must rely upon judgment, intuition—and obey the counsel of her heart!

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

Not to love, because *love* is such a very complete thing, made up of pity, protection, passion, admiration, etc. But to be *attracted*—strongly attracted—why, certainly; and there is always the possibility of the "attraction" becoming love—and of the new expelling the old.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

Never. But one may be conscious of a tendency and an inclination so strong that they demand immediately fanning by propinquity or promptly extinguishing by flight. More people than would, perhaps, care to confess it run away, daily (taking refuge in what Thackeray delightfully calls the "*alibi* treatment"), conscious of a strong attraction, due probably to having encountered a highly sympathetic nature or a kindred spiritual make-up. Or—as Byron has it—from the striking of "the electric chain, wherewith we are darkly bound."

5. Are love marriages the best?

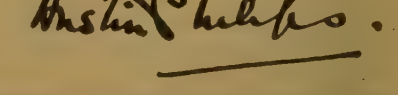
Assuredly, if spiritual and not material development be the properest aim of mankind. It is far, far better to *give*—even to give *unwisely*—and to suffer, and to be enriched by suffering, than to seek mere worldly advancement and gain "comfort" and cancer of the soul.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

"Beauty is in the eye of the gazer." A witty friend of mine once said—or quoted—that "he never saw a plain woman till he was forty." This was probably excessive; but for my own part I know of only one kind of *really* plain woman: to wit, the ungracious and hard. And have we not, every one of us, known adorable "*jolies laides*"?

7. Can any love last for ever?

What is often mistermed "lasting love" is frequently merely long habit; but lasting love is possible, provided (*a*) that the one party is so immensely superior in force and strength to the other as to feel great protectiveness and tenderness, and to arouse for itself in the weaker something akin to worship; or (*b*) provided that both parties are on the same intellectual and spiritual level—high or low—or very near it; so that they never drift far apart; or (*c*) provided—as sometimes happens—that both parties are so intensely vain and stupid as to remain in ecstasies with themselves and their doings for the remainder of their very narrow days.



MAY EDGINTON.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

Speaking generally, a man's love is stronger than a woman's. Women are so intensely practical that few of them are ever "in love" as men are "in love." A man's love blinds and infatuates him; a woman's seldom does. A man idealizes and adores the ideal. Woman, clearer-sighted, realizes, and has a calmer affection for the real. Men are sentimental, but few women are really sentimental. More husbands are in love with their wives than are wives with husbands.

2. Should a woman show her love?

Not to the full extent, if she is really in love. It is only safe for a woman to simulate intense love.

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

Yes. But not with the same kind of love; and not with strong love. To love more than one person at a time usually means that each is only partially loved: loved for some quality only; not taken as a whole and adored, faults and all. Some people are only capable of loving partially; and many deserve only partial loving.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

Not often. But it does occur, and is usually real and lasting. Perhaps the romantic idea of it lends a fragrance that does not die. Men and women are incurably romantic, and an appeal to the romantic sense is a very strong appeal; and a very tender memory.

5. Are love marriages the best?

Undoubtedly love marriages are the best. If the love lasts, the marriage is glorious. If it does not, husband and wife will have the experience and the memory of the great happiness as a bond between them. The aim of every human being should be towards a perfect love; and though the realization of it may prove imperfect and impermanent, a marriage which is not at least animated by that ideal is a contract which may rob a man and woman of one of the best of life's experiences.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

Certainly she can. Sex-attraction is a mystery, though it can always be recognized in the possessor. A pretty woman can be totally without magnetism. A plain woman may possess it galore. It is not beauty so much as that mysterious "It" which gives a woman power over men. When the plain woman possesses "It" her lovers do not know she is plain; and she never lets them know it. Perhaps no one really knows it save other women.

7. Can any love last for ever?

Yes. But it happens rarely, on both sides. A woman is more likely to receive lasting love from her husband—if she is clever—than a man to receive it from his wife. The lasting reciprocal love of two people is, of course, the most beautiful thing on earth.

HENRY DE VERE STACPOOLE.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

Passionate love is strongest in a man. The love that endures is not stronger in a woman than in a man, but I think it is found more frequently amongst women than amongst men.

2. Should a woman show her love?

Only in the hundred little ways in which she always shows it. For a woman to say to a man "I love you" would be detestable. I don't know exactly why.

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

No. Nor is it possible to love more than one person in the same lifetime. I am talking of love, not the passion that inspires boa-constrictors.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

I think the soul finds its mate instinctively and at once, though the fact may not be registered at once in the conscious mind. Then, again, the sort of love to which a young man's fancy turns in spring nearly always has its roots in first sight. Yes, I think that love at first sight occurs very often; is the rule, in fact, not the exception.

5. Are love marriages the best?

The man who marries a woman, or the woman who marries a man, urged to the act by any force other than that of love—even the most transient form of love—is not a person to whom I would entrust my cheque-book. The tap-roots of morality lie in natural instincts, and the morality of a man or woman whose natural instincts show poor soil will not bear good fruit—and it is the partner in marriage that generally has to eat most of the fruit. Then, again—there seems always to be an "again" in marriage questions—marriages, the result of transient forms of love, very often lead to appalling disasters. Even so, love marriages are the best—infinitely the best.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

Love in its real form has nothing to do with facial angles or colours. I don't think I could love a scraggy woman with no chin, and I am perfectly certain I could never love a female Daniel Lambert, but that has nothing to do with the great fact that it is the woman one loves, not the face or form of the woman. Men, as a rule, are the ugliest things on earth, yet women, somehow, love them; there is something behind the face—call it mind or call it soul or what you will—that holds and grips; this wanting, the prettiest face becomes a wearisome mask, and there seems to be some law that it generally is more or less wanting behind the prettiest face. On the whole, I think a plain woman can be loved as much as a pretty one—so long as her mind is not plain.

7. Can any love last for ever?

I think real love is the only thing that does last for ever: satiety destroys desire, death destroys enmity, age kills ambition, and Time takes and breaks every one of our toys, but nothing touches love. Man cannot outgrow it, it seems to outgrow man, strengthening with the years, feeding on destruction and, most surely, blossoming beyond the grave.

Henry de Vere Stacpoole

Mrs. C. N. WILLIAMSON.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

If there is strength in unselfishness, then I believe a woman's love is stronger than a man's, save in exceptional cases; and the question doesn't concern the exceptional cases. A man's love *seems* stronger than a woman's, but it breaks for less cause. How many men could go on loving a woman with the same passionate love, actually wishing to marry her, if she had been disfigured, or if her past suddenly gave up some unpleasing secret? Yet most women would continue to love a man if he were maimed or lost his eyesight; would even love him more, and long to show their worship by service. Nothing he had done in the past, if he had repented or atoned, could kill the love of loving women.

2. Should a woman show her love?

That depends upon the character of the man she loves. If he is over-modest and shy, she might give him a dazzling glimpse of her heart, to encourage him—provided she has any reason to think that he is beginning to care for her. But if he has no lack of self-assertion and self-appreciation, she would be wiser to let him find out what is in her heart without any help on her part. This isn't Early Victorian wisdom. It is Eve—early and late, and ever the same!

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

Yes, it is possible—and most bewildering. One person appeals to one side of our nature; another to an utterly different side. But in a great crisis—for instance, in an air-raid, when we could save one of those persons we loved, and not the other—we should suddenly learn which was really indispensable.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

I don't believe it does often occur. One feels a thrill, one takes a strong fancy, at sight. It may turn out to be love, or it may fade into disappointment. But a true and strong love at first sight ought to be more sublime than any other kind of slower development: for it should prove that two souls made for one another had recognized each other and flown together.

5. Are love marriages the best?

It seems to me that they are the *only* marriages which ever deserve the name of marriage. Perhaps some easily-satisfied nature could be happy if married for some other motive than love. But they would be the kind who can be content with the "second best" in life. And the difference between what they might call happiness and *real* happiness would be all the difference there is in a landscape seen on a drizzling day and on a day of glorious sunshine.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

Only if she were an angel, a genius, or what the Americans call a "Fascinator from Fascinatorville." And even so, it would be by a paradox. She wouldn't be a plain woman. In the eyes of the man who loved her she would be pretty.

7. Can any love last for ever?

I think all *real* love *must* last for ever. It can't help itself. It is a perpetual flame, and can't be blown out. Even if the loved one dies, and the one who is left loves another, if the first love has been Love with a capital L, the second would not take the place of the one that was gone. But the question born out of this answer is, "How often is love Love?"

Alice Williamson

E. TEMPLE THURSTON.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

The highest expression of a woman's destiny is in her children, and the medium of that expression as designed by Nature is her affections. With a man the highest expression of his destiny is in the energies and abilities for his work. To the woman, love must be the greater force. With her it is more than inspiration, more than impulse; it is—purpose.

2. Should a woman show her love?

If, as I have suggested, love is purpose to a woman, she should express so much of it as serves that purpose. A man who is no fool does not make cheap the qualities of his work, or a woman the depths of her affections.

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

If by this question is meant the broadest definition of love, combining comradeship with affection, passion with trust and reverence—no.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

Love at first sight, according to all accounts, must often occur—just as certain musical harmonies will break in pieces in a moment a glass ornament affected by the vibrations set in motion by those harmonies, so certain natures at first contact are made sub-consciously sensible of qualities of affinity which at once stimulate the affections. It is the same with antipathies.

5. Are love marriages the best?

A marriage without love may be good for the State, since a woman who does not love her husband will almost certainly love her children, and bring them up well. But this is reducing marriage to a State contract in which the parties concerned are merely servants of the State. It is hardly to be supposed this side of the question was intended. To the individual, love marriages can be the only satisfactory relationships. Hence the projected alterations in the laws of divorce. If cleanliness is next to godliness, unhappiness is surely in the same street with half the evil in the world.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

Looks have really very little to do with love. Character almost entirely dominates real affection. A plain woman with beauty of character cannot escape beauty of looks to the man who knows and loves her character.

7. Can any love last for ever?

This question is somewhat ambiguous. If it is meant, can love last during the entire lifetime of the persons in love? the answer must certainly be in the affirmative. A man and woman can love each other all their lives, and in old age return to the love of children, passionless but not without emotion. If, on the other hand, the words "for ever" refer to the eternity of time, the writer feels impelled to a sense of reserve from want of any practical experience.

G. Campbell Morgan.

MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

Excepting in certain very rare and extraordinary cases, a woman's love is strongest. Strongest in every relation where love plays a part. To this there is, perhaps, one exception. A man will often show the most wonderful love and tenderness from childhood to middle age for a sometimes quite undeserving parent. This is more unusual in a woman. What is usually called love—that is, romantic love—certainly lasts much longer in a woman than in a man, and often—too often—with the various unhappy concomitants of romantic love, of which the chief is jealousy.

2. Should a woman show her love?

This is a most difficult question to answer, but I am inclined to take the unconventional view and say yes, a woman should show her love. For one thing, her doing so may end a very unhappy and miserable state of mind—one that prevents a girl or woman from thinking of anything but her attraction towards one special human being, and whether he returns her feeling or not. If her love is rejected, she knows where she stands, and it not infrequently happens that the mere fact that a woman shows that powerful attraction awakens enough love in a man to lead to a very happy marriage. In this connection I should like to recall the old French saying: *Il y a des mariages heureux, il n'y en a point de délicieux.*

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

Certainly it is possible, and, indeed, extremely usual. I am inclined to think, though probably most men would not agree, that this strange state of mind and body is more usual in women than it is in men. A man who is really in love with a woman seems hardly to know that any other woman exists. But what is the rule with a man is by no means the rule with a woman. That may be the reason why it sometimes happens that a girl, after what has appeared to be a quiet, happy, normal engagement, suddenly breaks it off and marries another man, without undergoing that long, chilling process which men show in a similar case.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

Romantic love almost always occurs at first sight. Every language in the world has some synonym for this occurrence. Perhaps the French term is the most striking and the best. Among our Allies it is called "*Le coup de foudre.*" Some men and women—more often men than women—are capable of continually renewing this exciting and agreeable experience. They are born bachelors, and should remain so.

5. Are love marriages the best?

This raises a very great question—the question, What is love? No reasonable man or woman can doubt that a marriage founded on love is the ideal for every human being who wishes to enter that difficult relation. But personally I doubt very much if "falling in love" is the best preliminary. The terrible old saying—and terrible it is—"Marry in haste and repent at leisure," applies specially to the type of union in which two young people, feeling a violent attraction for one another, go off to a church or registry office without knowing anything of each other's true natures, virtues, or faults. The average middle-age marriage, which is nowadays increasingly common, is often extremely happy—this probably because it has been contracted in a much more thoughtful, sober way.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

Certainly. The French try to explain this by calling such a one "*Une jolie laide,*" and there is a type of actual ugliness which is much more attractive to men than insipid beauty. A plain woman may hope to be loved longer and more faithfully than the pretty woman whose chief or only attraction is her looks. Probably the most attractive gift is vitality. The girl or woman who is full of vitality will never lack admirers, or even lovers.

7. Can any love last for ever?

Love cannot only last, but can grow in intensity, depth, and tenderness in almost every relation of life. But where this rare and beautiful condition exists one of the two parties has to be extremely selfless, indulgent, and self-effacing, while yet able, to use a colloquial expression, to "keep his or her end up." No man or woman really loves a doormat, although sometimes the doormat induces the kind of pity which is akin to love.

Marie Belloc Lowndes

WILLIAM LE QUEUX.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

A woman usually makes the greatest sacrifices. Every woman yearns for love, while man is very prone to regard a woman's heart far too lightly. A good man woman makes her idol, while hero-worship, an admiration almost amounting to love, is usually upon the woman's side.

2. Should a woman show her love?

To do so without first being confident of it being reciprocated would, in most cases, lower her in the man's esteem. He might quite wrongly accuse her of being flighty, or even fast! No. A woman should be careful not to show her love, but preserve an indifferent calm until the man declares his affection.

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

Decidedly not. True love is affection for one person only. In the world no one else matters. Platonic love, as differing from real love, may allow a man or woman to feel a deep affection for several others, but the ideal love between man and woman cannot admit of more than a single object of devotion.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

There is a certain bacillus affecting youthful persons which scientists have as yet not named—the Love Microbe. This is mostly to be found in ballrooms, theatres, and seaside resorts, and persons attacked by the malady are prone to "fall in love" at first sight. This occurs frequently with the flapper and the youth under military age. But it is only an infectious symptom of the real love that is to follow in later life.

5. Are love marriages the best?

Decidedly. In these days of exorbitant prices, coupons, and the high cost of living, however, love in a cottage will cost more to-day than in the twelve-roomed house of a decade ago. But better not love at all than love for money. In my personal experience I have never known a single instance of such "arranged" marriages to turn out happily.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

Certainly. The first women of our time and our greatest heroines have usually been plain women. After all, the steady, thinking man knows well that beauty is but skin-deep, and that the most beautiful flowers are often the most deadly. Men with real love in their hearts do not actually heed a woman's good looks. It is her disposition, her sweetness of temper, her softness of speech, and her purity which attract the *desirable* husband. Those who seek a beautiful face too often find wickedness concealed beneath. I do not imply that all pretty women are wicked: but outstanding beauty is, alas! too frequently an incentive to an airiness of manner, a love of gaiety, and a desire for admiration which certainly bores a man after a brief period.

7. Can any love last for ever?

Yes. I had an aunt and uncle who had been married fifty-seven years. At night before the fire they would sit as lovers, the husband would hold his wife's hand and stroke it tenderly. They used to declare that they never quarrelled except upon some trivial matter—a window to be open, or shut. And each night the husband, aged eighty-nine, would raise his wife's wasting hand and, bending gallantly, imprint upon its back a kiss. They died within a month of each other, loving devotedly to the last. This is but one case within my own observation, and there must be hundreds of similar ones.

William le Queux

BARONESS ORCZY.

1. Whose love is strongest: a man's or a woman's?

In psychological matters it is, of course, very difficult to generalize; but, roughly speaking, we must admit that a woman's love is stronger than a man's, because it is capable of more resistance and of survival. With a man, love—meaning love in its highest acceptance and not just elemental passion, however potent—must always go hand in hand with respect and admiration for moral or intellectual worth; a man will not go to the length, say, of marrying a woman whom he could not respect; therefore, we must take it that there is a certain amount of calculation—noble, exalted calculation one admits—in a man's love for a woman. But with *her* it is different. A woman does not love a man for what he is, but often in spite of it; she will give herself just as whole-heartedly to a degraded wretch or to a criminal if she loved him, as she would to a Galahad. "She is not worthy to be the mother of my children." will often be a man's dictum in his innermost heart, even when his senses are enchained by the woman's whole personality; but I doubt if in the whole history of the great passion—if it ever comes to be written—a single case could be adduced of a woman saying in like circumstances: "No! he is unworthy to be the head of my house, the father of my children!"

2. Should a woman show her love?

If a woman really loves, she will find it impossible to conceal it. It will manifest itself in a thousand little ways, which the loved one—if he be very obtuse—will probably not notice, but which—providing that he is heart-whole at the time—will inevitably draw his love to her, sooner or later, as there is no more potent magnet in the whole world than perfect love.

3. Is it possible to love more than one person at the same time?

Absolutely impossible, if by love we mean perfect love—that is to say love of the spirit (the soul, the heart, the ego, or whatever we may choose to call our higher self) in union with love of the body. It is perfectly possible for either a man or a woman to be enslaved to another through the senses, whilst retaining a deep and sentimental attachment for some other person, but neither of these two sentiments in themselves can by the wildest sophistry be called Love.

4. Love at first sight—does it often occur?

Love is not a plant that grows or thrives. It is an elemental force—which is created.

5. Are love marriages the best?

Undoubtedly. To begin with there is nothing so abhorrent to a *sensitive* woman as a loveless marriage, and if she is not sensitive—if she is a mere doll, a clod, an insentient, unthinking being, the mere recipient of a home or social position—she is not likely to make any man happy. Gratitude for creature comforts, or for benefits to her own family, is but a cold and attenuated sentiment which will soon wither at touch of the first real temptation. That is, of course, the woman's point of view. As for the man who marries for any other reason save that of love—however shallow—if he marries for money, position, or mere business reasons, he is anyhow such a weak-kneed creature that he is not likely to make any woman happy.

6. Can a plain woman be loved as much as a pretty one?

As *much* if not as *often*, for in all probability she will be loved first by the man's higher self (his spirit, or soul, or ego, call it what we will), and if she then succeeds in capturing his senses as well, his love for her will be far stronger and more enduring than that which a beautiful woman so easily obtains. To begin with, the man himself will be a finer, more spiritual type of man altogether, a stronger character, more constant than the man who falls a ready victim to a pretty woman's charm. Here again we must think of love in its supreme, dual capacity—the great passion—not the mere elemental desire.

7. Can any love last for ever?

Love, if it be perfect love, will certainly in every case last for ever. There is nothing to kill it. Nothing to wear it out. The senses may become satiated, but the spiritual bond will continue long after Time has traced ineradicable lines on the loved one's face. Perfect love means perfect faith, perfect trust, perfect companionship of mind and of body, perfect community of interests, of ideals, and of ambitions. All the powers of darkness—sorrow, trouble, boredom, monotony, temptations—cannot prevail against its power.

And such love does exist—more often than most people think—only that it does not proclaim its existence before a cynical world.

Emmuska Orczy

The Thirteenth Pearl.

By ARTHUR STRINGER.

Illustrated by A. Gilbert, R.O.I.

"SERVE the coffee here," Mrs. Obden-Belpont announced over a rice-powdered shoulder.

"At the table, madam?" inquired the obviously scandalized old butler.

"At the table."

"And the liqueurs, madam?"

"And the liqueurs," retorted his mistress as she glanced down the long rectangle of damask, bordered with its chequered coast-line of jewel-burdened women and more sombre-figured men.

It had taken no little adroitness to pilot that mixed assemblage. But the Duke himself was now apparently deep in talk with Karsowintz.

". . . And also the Shropshire Collection," she heard Karsowintz's voice saying with that easy mastery of English peculiar to his countrymen. "That, as your Grace very well knows, is unmatched even in America."

The fixed melancholy of the Duke's face relaxed into a smile. It was a barricading sort of smile, apparently tinged with the Britisher's instinctive distaste for "swank."

"They're talking about the family shiners," a young *aide* in full uniform murmured across the table to Lady Evelyn, who, in turn, glanced along the chequered line of glory to the extremely sharp-featured woman in the sharp-angled tiara.

"Mother always makes me rather think of a Durbar, with those things on," she said, in her clear-noted contralto.

The Duchess was explaining to Karsowintz how a French perfume had been spilt on one of her turquoises, with the result that it changed the colour of the stone from blue to green. And this led the quiet-voiced Russian to explain some of the methods of counterfeiting precious stones, pointing out, as he went on, that even Cellini had not been above doctoring up a diamond. It relieved Mrs. Obden-Belpont to find that her unknown guest was talking so well.

A girl farther down the table quietly unsnapped a string of pearls from her neck and passed them up to Karsowintz.

"How about these?" she asked. She was blonde and fragile-looking, but amazingly vivid and matter-of-fact. And still again the expert smiled as he glanced over the tiny rope of milk-coloured globes.

"They are very beautiful," he acknowledged.

"It sounds terribly American, I suppose, but I should really like to know what they're worth."

"To you?" asked Karsowintz. "Or to a dealer?"

"The dealer, of course."

The mild-eyed Russian smiled again, even as he seemed to be performing a quick sum in mental arithmetic. All the table, by this time, was watching him.

"Eighteen thousand dollars," was his quiet response. "That is, of course, counting in the duty, but not the war-tax."

The blonde head nodded.

"I've always *said* that jewellers could be depended on," she announced, with a note of triumph. "To be exact, they cost mother seventeen thousand and seven hundred."

"I was wrong by three hundred," admitted the Russian. "Such things, of course, have gone up a little during the last few months. But we are boring the ladies, I'm afraid, by talking shop."

"Not on your life," retorted a dyspeptic millionaire near the head of the table. "Any woman I've ever known is only too hanged interested in jewels."

"But they demand so much of them," said Karsowintz, puzzled by the ripple of laughter as he frowned down at the little rope of pearls swaying from his finger-end. "Take these, for example. You have the habit of always aspiring for bigness. You have been spoiled, I think, by the synthetic pearl, the reconstructed pearl, which can be made as big as you wish. We hear a great deal about extraordinary pearls. But it is very, very rare that a spherical pearl of choice lustre weighs one hundred grains."

"About how big would that be?" asked Dugmore, the railroad king.

Karsowintz turned casually to the Duchess.

"I wonder if your Grace would make it easier to explain by lending me the Ceylapore Pendant for a minute or two?" he asked, with his silkily impersonal matter-of-factness. "That is, if it is not too difficult to unclasp," he added, as he noticed the owner of the pendant exchange glances with her husband

"I can undo it, mamma," said Lady Evelyn, who had already slipped out of her chair. The Duke nodded his head, and as Karsowintz turned and asked the butler for a scrap of paper the girl stood behind her mother and unfastened the ingenious clasp of the pendant.

"It will take only a minute," explained the abstracted Russian, as he produced a pocket-pencil and took the cluster of graduated pearls in his left hand. "And I feel sure your Grace will pardon my pointing out to this company that the centre pearl in this pendant-chain is the

"'EIGHTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS,' WAS HIS QUIET RESPONSE."

largest pearl in the Shropshire Collection, and to-day is unmatched not only in value but also in beauty by any pearl in America. It is hard to determine its size as it stands here on the string, so I shall place it on this sheet of paper, so, and with this pencil trace its extreme circumference."

He carefully pushed the graduated white globes back along the silk fibre which held them, separating the centre pearl from its mates by the fraction of an inch. Then with equally deliberate fingers he drew his pencil-point fastidiously about the sphere as it lay before him on the paper.

"That is the exact size," he said as he sat up, and with his unctuous bow passed the pendant back to its owner. "Now, will somebody be so good as to lend me a dime, an ordinary ten-cent piece? Ah, thank you. About the rim of the coin I shall now draw a second circle, close beside the first. And now, ladies and gentlemen," he went on, with a half-humorous assumption of the pedagogic manner, "you will see by actual measurement that the world-famous Ceylapore Pearl, the most valuable pearl in America to-day, is really not a sixteenth of an inch bigger than a dime. I'm not going to say what that pearl is worth in dollars and cents. You'd probably not believe me if I did."

Mrs. Obden-Belpont's quick eye went out to her guest of honour. On the ducal forehead she thought she detected a slight frown of displeasure. It reminded her that her cousins beyond the sea had a habit of being less vocal about their possessions. She promptly decided to pilot the talk into channels less commercial. But all chance for doing so was suddenly snatched out of her hands.

Even as she caught the eye of the Duchess, and was on the point of speaking, the calm of the house was disrupted by the sound of sudden tumult. From some neighbouring part of the house came the incomprehensible echo of overturned furniture, the quick stamp and scuffle of feet, a muffled shout or two, and then an even more mysterious noise, oddly like that made by slapping two leather-bound books together. The guests stiffened into involuntary attention.

"Upon my soul," gasped the *aide* in uniform, "that sounds uncommonly like a pistol-shot to me."

The women stared at each o her across the intervening bank of smilax and roses.

"Benchley, at once!" It was Mrs. Obden-Belpont, commanding a footman. Her butler, she found, was not in the room.

That functionary appeared the next moment. His face was a mask, his elbows were squared, and his eyes were fixed vacantly on space, in his preordained professional manner. But his breathing was hard, and a faint dew of moisture shone on his well-powdered skin.

"Benchley," demanded his mistress, "what was that?"

"A slight disturbance, madam," he replied.

"So we are all aware. *But what was it?*"

"I think, madam, it was a 'ouse-breaker," he acknowledged.

"Then that *was* a pistol-shot," announced the *aide*.

"Was anybody hurt?" demanded Obden-Belpont.

"No, sir, not to speak of."

"And where's your man?"

"We 'ave him subdued, sir."

"Then bring him in," commanded the master of the house. "Bring him in so that we can have a look at him."

A run of *pizzicato* murmurs rose from the table.

Benchley returned to the room, leading in by the arm a rather business-like figure in navy-blue serge. The hands of this figure were tied behind him with a table-napkin, reinforced by what looked like a trunk-strap. On one side of his still youthful-looking face, between the ear and the eyebrow, stood out a purplish welt from which blood trickled slowly, drop by drop. His eyes were sullen and slightly oblique, giving the ashy face a faintly Asiatic expression. But that staring group was obviously disappointed at some absence of picturesqueness in him, looking, as he did, more like a tradesman's messenger than a nocturnal Captain Kidd.

"He won't talk, sir," explained Benchley.

Still again the prisoner was scrutinized.

"Then supposing we see just what he's got on him," suggested Obden-Belpont. "And, by the way, who got his weapon?"

"It's here, sir," responded Benchley, as he handed a revolver to his master. And that firearm seemed suddenly to make amends for the absence of picturesqueness in its owner's attire.

"Go through his pockets," commanded Benchley's master.

The solemn old servant stepped back to the prisoner and with pursed-up lips proceeded to carry out what was plainly an unsavoury task.

"Loaded, of course," ejaculated Obden-Belpont, as he exhibited a full clip of pointed-nosed cartridges to the company about the table.

Karsowintz, who had lighted his second cigarette, sat back staring at the prisoner. He inspected him with dreamy and abstracted eyes. He continued to smoke in meditative silence as Benchley unearthed a set of skeleton keys, a jointed steel pocket-jemmy, and a small flash-lamp. Then from an inner pocket a yellow silk handkerchief was produced.

A murmur of wonder went up from the table as this handkerchief was unfolded. For that movement revealed a thin hunting-case watch, a pair of emerald earrings, a diamond-studded breast-pin, and six or seven rings of various sizes and settings.

"Is that all?" Obden-Belpont demanded of his butler.

"All but a bit of change in his trousers pocket, sir," answered Benchley.

"Then go to the telephone and call up the police. Tell them just what happened and say we want an officer here at once."

A look of trouble came into the butler's customarily impassive face.

"Begging your pardon, sir, Evans 'as just discovered that the telephones are out of order. The wires appear to 'ave been tampered with, sir."

Still again a not altogether disagreeable stir of alarm rippled about the waiting and listening table.

"I suppose that was your work?" the owner of the house proclaimed to his sullen-eyed captive.

The captive's reply was as unexpected as it was incomprehensible. Instead of answering that question directly, and in the tongue in which it was put to him, he stared blankly at the wall and rattled out a sentence or two in a foreign language. Then silence fell once more on the room.

"Now, what does *that* mean?" asked the railroad king as the guests sat looking at each other.

"Does anyone here happen to know Hindustani?" It was Karsowintz's velvety voice which had put the question.

"It was *not* Hindustani," announced the Duke, with decision. "I can at least assure you of that."

"Then what was it?" demanded the practical-minded mistress of the house, with her eye bent on the dreamy-faced Karsowintz.

"Heaven only knows," replied the latter, with what was plainly a frown of perplexity. "But it was none of the seven with which I can claim a speaking acquaintance."

It was the slightly indignant Benchley who ventured the next statement.

"He can speak English, sir, as well as I can. We 'eard him doing it."

"But with us you have rooted objections to conversing, is that it?" inquired Obden-Belpont as he faced his prisoner. "You don't intend to talk, do you?"

The question remained unanswered. It was Karsowintz who broke the silence.

"That is a decision which time for thought may possibly alter," he suggested. Then he turned about in his chair and again with great deliberation studied the man in the business-looking blue serge suit.

"What do you mean by time for thought?" Mrs. Obden-Belpont asked of Karsowintz, struggling against her foolish antipathy for the man.

"Oh, I should merely suggest," was the Russian's quiet reply, "that we give him the pleasure of our company until he showed some signs of changing his mind. In other words, I should keep him here until he woke up to the fact that silence isn't always golden."

"Well, he's going to be here for half an hour or so," concurred Obden-Belpont. "So he might as well stay in this room with us. Manners, help Benchley carry in that Norman arm-chair from my library—the big chair of carved oak."

The speaker turned back to his guests. As he did so he took up the pistol which lay beside him on the table. "And you, Captain Willison, must be thoroughly familiar with firearms. So will you be good enough to take charge of this and at the same time see to it that our prisoner makes no movement to escape—no successful movement, I mean?"

The pink-cheeked man in uniform, with two dozen eyes suddenly centred on him, flushed a little as the weapon was handed gingerly down the line. But he was very calm as he took the revolver and the clip of cartridges in his hand.

"If he makes a move," announced that quiet-eyed young officer, "I can drop him at forty paces."

"ALL EYES WERE DIRECTED ON THE ODD FIGURE ENTHRONED IN THE ANTIQUE CHAIR AT THE END OF THE TABLE."

Karsowintz's eye was contemplating him with a sort of sardonic apathy. At the same time the door opened and the two servants lumbered in with the heavy chair.

"He will be wise enough, I imagine, to remain in our midst," ventured the lazy-toned Russian, as he lit still another cigarette.

"We'll at least do what we can to keep him,"

Obden-Belpont assented with decision, as he gestured for the servants to place the chair at the foot of the table. "Now, Benchley, put your man in that chair. Now take these table-napkins and tie him there, one leg each front leg of the chair. Yes, you had better double the strands, one at the ankle and another at the knee. Now let his hands loose from the back and tie them along the arms of the chair. That will be more comfortable, I imagine. No, not too tight. But make sure of your knots."

All eyes were directed on the odd figure enthroned in the antique chair at the end of the table. That ponderous setting of carved oak seemed to leave the prisoner's figure smaller than ever. It became reassuring in its impression of fragility. Even the women could now contemplate the captive without timidity. But it was Karsowintz's voice which finally broke the silence.

"Might I look over that loot of his?" he languidly inquired. "It may give us an inkling of what his taste is."

The handkerchief was passed along the table until it rested in front of the Russian. A somewhat disdainful smile rose to his lips as he prodded with a long and pointed finger amid the litter of trinkets on the square of soiled yellow silk. He had taken his turn, by this time, as the target for their attention.

"Most of it from the maids' quarters, I imagine," commented Karsowintz. "This ruby, you see, is reconstructed. And the pearl in this pin is what the trade calls a synthetic one."

"How did you ever come to know so much about jewels?" asked Mrs. Obden-Belpont.

"That was my only mission in life for quite a number of years," the Russian smilingly replied. "First at the Yousoff Mines in the Urals for eight years, and for nearly six years as one of the European agents for Yandel."

"For Yandel?" It was the Duke himself who had turned about in his chair.

"Then you knew him?" asked Karsowintz.

"Yes."

"Well?"

"No. But I once had occasion to confer with that extraordinary little chap," quietly acknowledged the other.

"Who was Yandel?" asked Mrs. Obden-Belpont.

"Perhaps your Grace would be the best one to answer that question," suggested the velvet-voiced Russian.

"On the contrary, I should prefer repeating it," retorted his Grace. "I met him only once, as I have said, and on merely a trivial matter."

"I doubt if it was trivial to Yandel," said Karsowintz, with a grimace that struck his hostess as not over-respectful. "Your Grace may not know it, but Yandel waited for twenty years for a pearl in your possession."

"I'm sorry the wait was a hopeless one," was the other's unruffled reply.

The Russian looked at the ceiling. "I don't think I ever knew a more persistent man," he quietly intoned.

"I should like to know about him," said the nobleman with the eye as melancholy as a mastiff's. Karsowintz, catching the nod of his hostess, sat for a moment meditating his cigarette-end.

"Phineas Yandel knew more about pearls, I imagine, than any man who ever lived. He made a life study of them. He specialized in them, about the same as Fabre, for example, specialized in insects, or as your own Edison has specialized on electricity. A diamond is always a diamond, no matter how placed, how set or hung. And twenty of them are merely twenty diamonds. But with a pearl it is different. One single superlatively beautiful pearl may be worth forty, fifty, sixty thousand dollars. But twelve pearls of the same size and lustre, duly matched, are worth much more than merely twelve times that many thousand dollars. In a rope, or cluster, perfect in itself, they take on an entirely new value. And therein Yandel still again showed his bigness. He showed it in choosing only the incomparably fine examples. He thought only of the future, the dim and distant future. He diverted everything to one end, and one end only. But he had the compensation of knowing it was a big end. And it was something more than a mere blind passion, for it was based on reason. The little man's psychology must have been as keen as his insight. For he was able to foresee the trend of his century's thought and feeling. He understood what was happening to his country."

"Well, what *was* happening?" demanded the king of rails, as Karsowintz put down his cigarette.

"Why, he foresaw *you*," responded the Russian, with his voice of velvety quietness. "He realized that America was going to become the richest country in the world. He foresaw your new aristocracy of wealth, your new kings of copper and oil and steel. And Yandel saw that your newer kings of finance would do what the others of the kind had already done in Tyre, in Rome, in Venice, in Antwerp and London. They would demand jewels, just as those old-world kings had demanded them.

"I shall not attempt to say just where the Great Idea came from. I have heard it said that Yandel stumbled across it by accident, in Scutari, when in a Turkish cell there he bought from an old Armenian what later gave every evidence of being the Gongibus Pearl. Heaven only knows how it had come into the possession of that verminous old convict, and Heaven only knows what Yandel paid for it. But it was a perfect gem, weighing exactly one hundred and seventy grains.

"That Gongibus Pearl, at any rate, stood before him as an ideal, as a criterion of splendour, and he conceived the idea, the Napoleonic idea, of assembling a necklace, a necklace wherein each gem would be equal in glory and value to the Gongibus itself. And from that day on, as far as we can judge, he began shaping destiny toward that one far-off end.

"So Yandel slaved, slaved always, plotting to achieve the control of more money, and still more money, for the next king pearl.

"All the time, of course, he was dealing openly in the smaller gems. But this must have been merely for the wherewithal to reach the big, supreme end, and also as a blind, I suppose, to keep that one big movement screened from the world. Then he had agencies to establish, agencies in all the God-forsaken corners of the world. This meant that he found himself with much travelling to do, travelling that was uncomfortable and quite often perilous. He had the habit of turning up unexpectedly in Amsterdam, or in Singapore, or in the Punjab, or in Maimsburg itself. But always it was for the one purpose.

"And at intervals Yandel would reappear at the New York office of his, that untidily cramped and dingy office standing a mere ante-room to the grim but orderly vault which loomed up behind it.

"It took the best part of a lifetime, but Yandel piled up that necklace, pearl by pearl, until he was the possessor of twelve incomparable and perfectly matched gems.

"Yandel's so-called Gongibus Pearl, the first of the twelve, I have already touched on. Another of them is what is generally known as the White Goddess Pearl. In Dagami Yandel had stumbled across the first rumour of the White Goddess. It was an image of the Goddess of Grace and was given to the temple of the goddess by the Emperor Kanghi. Embedded in the statue, to form the breasts of the figure, were two pearls. More than a century later the kingdom was swept by a revolution, and the sacred temple of the goddess was ravaged. The statue was carried off. One pearl was destroyed, I believe, in removing it from the metal in which it had been embedded. The other was treated more respectfully. Eventually it became the property of a Dutch camphor-trader, who was murdered and robbed of his treasure by a colony of trepang gatherers. It passed from hand to hand about the Far East and was finally reported to be in the possession of a piratical *bêche-de-mer* trader on the Island of Panguturange. Now, Yandel was naturally sceptical as to the countless tall yarns about priceless jewels ornamenting Asiatic idols, for he very well knew that more often than not they were about as worthless as our modern stage-jewellery—mere junk and glass to be viewed at a respectful distance. But when he investigated the Kanghi story, delving into authentic records, into actual history, he found that the King had indeed given such a statue to the temple. Yet it was a year later before Yandel reappeared in the East, on the trail of the White Goddess. He picked up the loose threads of rumour, and wandered up and down those long and lonely trade routes, enduring heat and filth, encountering deceit and treachery, voyaging on rotten deck-boards and faring on unspeakable food. For half a year the silence of those equatorial back-waters of the world swallowed him up. He finally ran down the White Goddess in a leper-colony on an island called the Nameless Island. What it cost him, what he paid for it, nobody ever knew. But he nearly paid for it with his life, for when he was picked up at sea by a Dutch cargo-schooner he was out of his wits and was all but thrown overboard as a threatened victim of *beri-beri*. Yandel's experiences seemed to have filled him with a hatred of the East. For when he learned of a second king pearl, the Rana of Dholpur Pearl, in those quarters he did not go after it himself, but sent another. I know this, because I happened to be the person he sent.

"This brings me down to the eleventh pearl, which really isn't the eleventh in actual line of rotation, for it was acquired some time after either the Star of the East or the White Goddess, I can't be sure which. Yandel carried one of these gems with him, however, when he wandered south from Manila to the Australian beaches. Perhaps you can picture the little man, silent, wary, self-contained, in the midst of those boisterous beachcombers. The pearling-fleet crews of that coast are all gamblers. In bad weather they escape the storm by running up into the mangrove creeks, where they drink like stevedores and gamble like Russians. In good weather they pearl, the divers going down feet first, the 'openers' on deck digging out the shell-meat with sharpened bamboo sticks, the 'boss' sitting under a stretch of dirty awning, washing the gems as they come to him, dropping the small pearls into an old pickle bottle, tossing the bigger ones into a battered old sheet-iron cash-box—and Yandel, loafing about watching him, always, always watching him. And when the cry went up that a king pearl had been found all work stopped, and the pearl, still unclean with mucus, was inspected and stared at and passed from hand to hand. Yandel wanted that pearl. So did several others, free-booter buyers who came swarming about that filthy schooner like flies about a rotting pear. So that night it was auctioned off on deck. You can picture the sale, by lamplight, under the Southern Cross. Bid after bid, starting with a thousand pounds sterling! Prodigal men and cautious-eyed men, white and yellow and brown, traders and thieves and cut-throats! But dropping out one by one as the figures climbed higher! But Yandel didn't drop out. It came to a personal contest, at last, between Yandel and a wealthy young Portuguese adventurer who kept after the little man, bid by bid, who, in the end, out-distanced him, and carried off the pearl in triumph.

"Yandel was crushed. He had done his best, but miracles were beyond him. No one suspected it, however, for whatever he may have been he was at least a master-actor. Late that night, in fact, when the gamblers crowded their reeking cabin, tired of ordinary hazards, Yandel and his Portuguese rival indulged in a game of their own. It was your American game of poker. It became a duel, the stakes doubling hand by hand. Finally Yandel produced his pearl and placed it beside the fellow-pearl owned by the Portuguese. They played for it. That game made a dozen tired-eyed gamblers, used to fabulous stakes, rather hold their breath. But Yandel won.

"THE PENDANT WAS NOT THERE!"

"He pocketed his pearl as though it had been a shilling, yawned indifferently, and announced that he was a bit sleepy. But instead of surrendering to slumber he watched his chance and slipped over the side, for he had no wish to court murder at the hands of that crew of outlaws.

"It was I who first picked up the information about Yandel's Rana of Dholpur Pearl. The Rana's necklace had been dispersed. Following his death, a rug-dealer who had brought a shipment of carpets and shawls down from Amritsar, in the Punjab, had drifted into Karachi, on the Arabian Sea, with the centre pearl from his necklace in his possession. I traced that pearl clear up the Chinese coast. There was nothing romantic about its acquisition. It was merely a matter of business and hard bargaining. The Dholpur Pearl weighed one hundred and eighty-three grains when I found it. But the skin had been injured, though I soon saw it was an injury which any careful peeler might put right, with the loss of not more than a dozen grains. And it cost Yandel, bruised and battered as it was, thirty-three thousand pounds in English gold, delivered by the Hong-Kong agents of the Bank of England. It was the altogether unexpected acquisition of this second pearl, I think, which actually established me in Yandel's confidence. I had lengthened his string for him with two perfect specimens, and the lengthening of that string was his one and only object in life——"

Karsowintz came to a stop. His story snapped as a string snaps. It ended as a film empties on an empty spool. Abruptly the suave voice ceased, for that listening company found itself engulfed in sudden and inexplicable darkness.

The lights had gone out, completely, unexpectedly. So unexpected was that little calamity, in fact, that it took on the nat re of something confounding.

This initial shock to the group about the table was followed by a brief space of time wherein no one seemed either to move or speak. After the shock came memory, reminders of the telephone that had been found silenced. And more than one member of the company recalled the fact that one of their guests was an unwelcome one, an unreliable one, possibly a perilous one.

"*That burglar!*" shrilled the thin soprano of a woman's voice out of the blackness. It was abrupt and exclamative and it was also electrifying. It was followed by a sentence which cut through the same velvety blackness, a sentence spoken sharply, and apparently in Slavic. Then came a soft confusion of sounds, little gasps and calls of warning, a mingled movement of feet and furniture, a call for candles, candles at once.

"Captain Willison, be careful with that revolver!" warned a man's voice. Then came further calls of "Watch the doors . . . Marley, dear, are you there all right? . . . Somebody get hold of him, the burglar, I mean, before . . . David, don't *think* of leaving me here alone for an instant . . . Are you *ever* coming with those candles, Benchley? . . . It's a switch, in the basement . . . when you throw it open. . . . Is it you, Eugene? . . . Hasn't anybody here such a thing as a match?"

Then, to the bewilderment of that disordered beehive, the lights themselves flashed on again. And a second lethal wave seemed to flow over them. They remained quite immobile for a moment or two, looking from one to the other with slightly shamefaced expressions.

"*Your pendant, mamma!*"

It was half an interrogation, half an exclamation. It touched the room into sudden attentiveness as all eyes were turned toward the woman in the tiara still seated at the table.

The gesture of that woman was a purely mechanical one. Her right hand lifted to her throat, and groped there for a moment. Then it was suddenly pressed tight against the pale skin, which at the same time rose and fell in an involuntary gasp or two of wonder, of consternation. For the pendant was not there!

Then a dozen awakening minds remembered and two dozen startled eyes swept the room.

"Why, he's—he's gone!" somewhat inanely gasped Obden-Belpont as he stared at the empty chair. Beside it lay an open knife, a slashed trunk-strap, and a litter of severed linen.

It was Mrs. Obden-Belpont who spoke, coolly, yet a little tremulously, to the powdered butler who had reappeared beside her elbow.

"Have the police come?" she demanded.

"I think that's them in the car now, madam."

"Then get to all the other doors, quickly! Get a man at each." She rose to her feet, without even waiting to see that order carried out. "And you," she said, with a nod toward the man in livery, "if you will bring that pistol with you to——"

She stopped short, interrupted by a shout from Dugmore, the man of rails. He was pointing with his thick forefinger toward a huddle of milkily iridescent globes that lay along the rug-edge just beyond the empty chair.

"There's your pendant!" he cried, triumphantly swinging up from his chair as he spoke.

He was the first to reach them. Yet he had a little difficulty in gathering them up, for the silk fibre on which they were strung seemed to have been broken. Several of them even rolled loose from the edge of the rug to the surface of the waxed and polished floor beyond.

There was silence, the silence of suspended breathing, as he stepped back to the table, his heavy face flushed with stooping. He let the gems fall from his cupped hands to the damask-covered table.

"That's the pendant, isn't it?" he asked, as his thick finger endeavoured to arrange them in their graduated order. The guests were on their feet by this time, clustered about him. The Duke, who had remained seated, moved his head slowly up and down in assent.

"*But the big centre pearl is gone!*" cried out the same contralto voice which two minutes before had startled that assemblage. And the company drew apart a little, one staring questioningly and rather blankly into the eyes of the other.

"*Where's Karsowintz?*" asked somebody from the far end of the table, out of the momentary silence.

For Karsowintz was no longer in the room.

The Problem Club

By

BARRY PAIN.

Illustrated by A. Garrett.

No. X.—THE THREEPENNY PROBLEM.

"'OH, YES,' HE SAID. 'IF YOU WANT ALL THEM THREEPENNIES, YOU'D BETTER GET THEM OUT OF THE BLANKY OFFERTORY-BAG NEXT SUNDAY!'"

"CHILD'S-PLAY," said Major Byles, "that's what this problem is. It is required to offer a half-crown for a threepenny bus-fare, and to receive the change wholly in threepenny-bits. And you're not allowed to give the conductor anything or promise him anything as an inducement to let you have the nine threepennies. It's my belief that you'd only have to ask in a civil way, and any conductor would do it for you. A more obliging set of men than the London bus-conductors couldn't be found, except perhaps the London police. I don't call it a problem at all. You'll all win, of course, and that will mean a comfortable tenner for every member of the club except myself—just because I'm stuck up here in the chair. It's scandalous." He snipped the end of a cigar ferociously, and lit it as if he took pleasure in its destruction—which indeed may have been the case. "However, I must do my duty, and I'll call on my reverend friend Mr. Cunliffe to tell us what he has done about it."

"My story is a sad one," said the Rev. Septimus Cunliffe. "It leads me to believe that our chairman has over-estimated the amiability of the conductors and under-estimated the difficulty of the problem. I gave a half-crown for a threepenny fare, and told the man that it would be a great kindness if he could let me have my change in threepenny-pieces. He never said a word but handed me a florin and three coppers.

"'Did you hear what I asked you?' I said to him.

"'Oh, yes,' he said, 'I heard. If you want all them threepennies, you'd better get them out of the blanky offertory-bag next Sunday!'"

"Extraordinary," said the chairman. "Something must have occurred to ruffle the man's temper. Did you find any difficulty, Bunford?"

"I failed absolutely," said Sir Charles Bunford. "No doubt I made a mistake in putting my request during the busy hour of the morning. The conductor looked resigned but sardonic.

"'Want it all in threepennies, do you?' he said. 'Would you like them of any particular year?'

"I said that the date was immaterial. Any year would do.

"'That's all right,' he said. 'Then you can wait for next year's.' And he gave me a shilling, a sixpence, and ninepence in what is generally described at the inquest as bronze."

"Of course," said the chairman, "it was a mistake to bother the man when he was busy. And a little tact is wanted. If I'd been in for this competition myself I shouldn't just have asked for my change in threepennies; I should have given some plausible reason for wanting it."

"With great respect, sir," said Mr. Quillian, "I must differ from you. I had the same idea and tried it. I told the conductor that I had a bet that I would get my change entirely in threepennies. I thought it would appeal to his sporting instinct. All he said was, 'You've lost, then,' and gave me the change without as much as one threepenny in it. Seemed rather pleased about it, too."

"I'd much the same experience," said Dr. Alden. "As I gave the man my half-crown I mentioned that I was a collector of threepenny-bits, and asked him if he could help me. He gave me two shillings and three pennies.

"'Well,' he said, 'if you like to step off at the Bank of England and ask the Chief Cashier to give you threepennies for that little lot, you can mention my name.'"

"It's quite possible," said the chairman,

"that those conductors had not got the threepennies to give you. I go for days sometimes without as much as seeing a threepenny-bit. It really looks as if the problem presented more difficulties than I had at first supposed. Did you manage to surmount them, Mr. Matthews?"

"Can't say I did, though I took a lot of trouble about it. There's no two ways about it—if you put an unreasonable request to a complete stranger, whether he's a bus-conductor or anything else, you're likely to be sat on and not to get what you want either. I picked a bus in the slack time, running nearly empty, with a goodnatured-looking conductor. I chatted with him for five minutes, and got him friendly-disposed towards me, before I even mentioned threepennies. Then I asked him if he got many of them. He said he took enough of them to fill a pint-pot some days and he wished he didn't. They were finicky things to handle and easy dropped. Well, that was a very good start. I gave him a half-crown for my threepenny ticket and told him that I would be glad to take as many threepenny-bits off his hands as he liked to give me. Said I wanted them for a young nephew of mine. The man was quite willing, and if anybody had offered me twenty pounds just then for my chance of winning the prize to-night I'd have refused it. If anybody would give me twenty pence for the same chance at the present moment I'd jump at it. The trouble came in just as the chairman has indicated. The man looked through his silver and did his best for me, but one solitary threepenny was all he could raise. I got that one, of course, but one is not nine. It was just rotten bad luck. He said that nineteen days in twenty he could have given me a dozen of them, but he supposed it had to happen so."

"You call that bad luck?" said the Hon. James Feldane, gloomily. "Not half as bitter as mine."

"We'll have the story of your failure, Jimmy," said the chairman.

"Failure's nothing. I've failed before and shall do again. It's what happened afterwards that worries me. All the same, I don't know that I should have failed if I had simply trusted to my own judgment, but the woman looked so smart and brainy that I let myself be influenced, though she was really talking clotted nonsense."

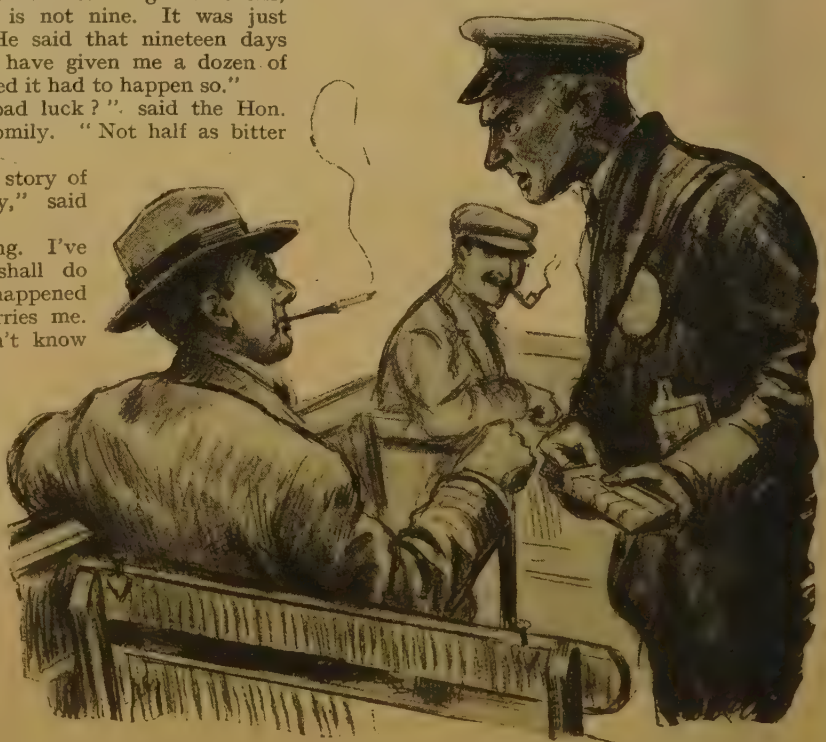
"You're getting on too quickly," said the chairman. "To what woman do you refer?"

"How should I know? I haven't an idea what her name is. She was one of a pack of hens that I found cackling in my sister's drawing-room. They were discussing their maids and how to manage them, same as women have always done since the year one. The brainy-looking one said that when she had a reasonable order to give a maid, she always put it in the form of a request; but if she had an unreasonable request to make to a maid she always put it in the form of an order. She said that this always bluffed the maid out. I thought there might be something in that bit of wisdom. If you give an order in an ordinary way, as if it were a matter of course, it may get taken in that spirit. Anyway, I thought I'd try it with the bus-conductor. I gave him my half-crown, and said in my light and casual way, 'Threepenny ticket. And give me my change in threepenny-bits.'

"He didn't say anything. He just glared at me. If he had said anything it would probably have scorched the top off the bus. He gave me my change—with never a threepenny-bit in it—and then glared some more. He'd got rather a good glare. Broke up my nerves, anyhow. At the next corner I hopped off.

"Now mark the sequel. A little later I owed a taxi eightpence, gave the man a half-crown and waited for my change. 'Sorry, sir,' said the man, 'but I shall have to give you six threepenny-bits. I've got no other silver.'

"And that's the way things happen. When you want a thing you can't get it, and when you don't want it it's chucked at you."



"HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING. HE JUST GLARED AT ME."

"Well, really," said the chairman, without a blush, "as I foresaw, this turns out to be a very difficult problem. No interruptions, please. I know that I did not actually say that it was very difficult, but it was in my mind. It looked easy, as I pointed out in my opening remarks, but nobody knows better than I do that appearances are often deceptive. I shall call upon our great expert and prize-winner, Mr. Pusely-Smythe. I am confident that he will have realized the difficulties and acted accordingly."

Mr. Pusely-Smythe smiled grimly and sardonically. "Thank you, sir," he said, "for your kind words. I do not want to brag, but I gave this problem my very earnest consideration, and I do think that I realized some at least of the difficulties before me. I saw, firstly, that it was possible and even probable that the conductor might not have nine threepenny-bits to give me. Now some company-promoters have found out that the best way to get gold out of a gold-mine is to start by putting a little gold into it. I adopted that principle. I selected a certain bus on a certain route. I arranged that on the journey just before I made my appearance no fewer than twelve passengers would pay their fares with threepenny-bits. It only required a little organization. If you tell a human boy or even a human girl to take your threepenny-bit, pay a penny bus-fare with it, and keep the change, you get willing service without any troublesome demand for explanations. Secondly, I had to have a story to tell the conductor that would induce him to oblige me. I was prepared to tell him that a friend had promised me that if I could collect a thousand threepenny-bits for the London Hospital, he would add double that amount to it.

"I notice, sir, an unworthy expression of suspicion on the face of my learned friend Mr. Quillian. My story for the conductor was not only plausible—it was actually true. I was the man who had made that promise to myself. (If I am not my own friend, who is?) Further, I was so absolutely certain of success that I remitted the sum in question, thirty-two pounds ten shillings, to the hospital and have a receipt for it. When I deducted the thirty-two pounds ten shillings expenditure from the hundred and ten pounds prize, I calculated that it would still leave a living wage for myself. Well, that was the position. I saw that there were two main difficulties in this problem, and I had arranged to meet both of them."

"Quite so," said the chairman. "As I've always said, these things need to be worked out in a clear-minded and systematic way. And the result was all right?"

Pusely-Smythe's smile was more sardonic than ever. "Much depends on the point of view; it was all right from some points of view. Punctually at the time I had fixed I took my seat on the top of the bus I had selected. About a minute later the conductor came up to collect the fares. I felt for my half-crown. I had not got any half-crown. I had no money on me whatever. I had inadvertently left my money at home. There was nobody on the bus to whom I could apply for temporary assistance. Well, there was no help for it. The conductor was weary, but firm. He told me to hop off the bus and not to try it on again. I hopped. It may have been all right from the point of view of the other competitors, but from my own point of view it was less satisfactory. And it only shows that you may lose your game by missing a perfectly easy shot."

Mr. Wildersley, A.R.A., had demanded threepennies from a conductor on the ground that he was collecting them. The conductor had replied that he was there to take the fares, not to supply private museums. Mr. Austin had met a most obliging conductor, who, however, had no threepennies in his possession. Lord Herngill and Mr. Hesseltine had only contemptuous refusals to record.

This, of course, happened before the war. In these days, when the gentler, kindlier, and more refined sex has charge of our public vehicles the problem might prove easy of solution.

"Well," the chairman began, "it looks as if the whole lot of you duffers had failed." Here the secretary, Lord Herngill, whispered a few warning words in his ear, and the chairman nodded assent.

"Yes," he resumed, "it may look to you duffers as if the whole lot of you had failed, but of course that would be wrong. Nobody has succeeded in getting nine threepennies in change. But in that case the nearest approximation to that number wins. Mr. Matthews got one threepenny, and conformed to the conditions. Nobody else even got one. Therefore I declare Mr. Matthews to be the winner."

Jimmy Feldane confided his private sorrows to his friend Hesseltine. "I don't mind old Matthews winning. He's a genial old bird, and what he don't know about the noble art of dining ain't worth worrying over. But there is just one thing that makes me want to kick myself round and round this room till I get giddy. When Matthews told us his yarn he said he'd take twenty pence for his chance of the prize. I ought to have been on to it in a flash, if not sooner. One-and-eight for a sporting chance of a hundred and ten pounds is good enough. The more I think of it the more I see that I ought not to be allowed out except in charge of a nursemaid."

"Oh, we all missed that chance," said Hesseltine. "Maybe a drink might do us some good."

While they were taking the medicine indicated, the chairman read out the problem which was to employ them during the following month. The fantastic editor of *The Pig-keepers' Friend* had entitled it, "The Q-Loan Problem," and its terms were as follows:—

"It is required in three days to borrow as many things as possible, the name of each thing to begin with the letter Q. Nothing counts for the competition if its name is on the list of more than one member. No money may be given or promised in respect of any loan."

"And to-morrow morning, bright and early," said Jimmy, "I'm off to the Zoo in a taxi to see if I can't borrow their quagga."

George Meredith as a Publisher's Reader and Critic.

SOME OF HIS OPINIONS OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES' MANUSCRIPTS.

GEORGE MEREDITH.
Photo Hollyer.

By B. W. MATZ.

The facsimile reproductions of Mr. Meredith's handwriting are made with the permission of Messrs. Chapman and Hall, for which firm George Meredith acted for many years as Publisher's Reader, and of which the writer of the following article is a member.

HOW many of the well-known novelists of to-day act as publisher's reader, I wonder? In the older days it was the custom; and James Payn and George Meredith, to name but two, filled such posts in respective publishing houses. Each made discoveries of new authors, and, it is well known, rejected others who became famous. The same misfortune, of course, happens to-day, and we could name several successful books which have been rejected by more than one publisher, before they met the eye of a "reader" who not only saw merit in them from a literary point of view, but also from a commercial one.

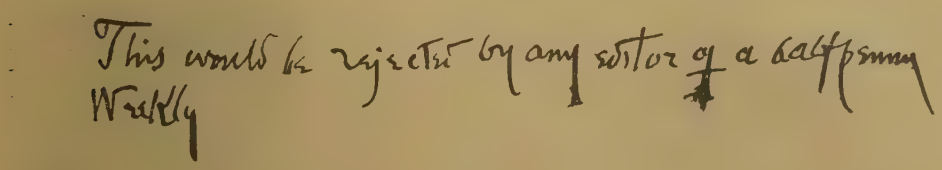
Those who know and appreciate the works of George Meredith either as poet, essayist or novelist, would hesitate perhaps to name him as a good publisher's reader: for if his advice was to be based upon his own standard of literture, it would have to be admitted that the popular, and therefore the commercial, view would be more or less a closed book to him. Yet he did act in such a capacity for upwards of thirty years, and the firm for whom he acted religiously kept copies of his opinions on the numerous manuscripts submitted to him. It is the purpose of this article to glance at some of the criticisms he passed on the work of his contemporaries that came before his penetrative eye and brain.

In the early association with the firm, he evidently received an honorarium for each manuscript read; but he used to be in attendance at Chapman and Hall's offices in Piccadilly and frequently addressed his letters from there, made appointments to meet friends there, or to receive correspondence. "Please send word Chapman and Hall's," or similar phrases, are to be found in his letters to friends.

Whatever the earlier arrangements were, he certainly made a compact with the firm later, which made him a member of the staff with a fixed salary, for in 1864 he writes to a friend that he is to be "in Piccadilly three afternoons a week: write all letters anent MSS., will occasionally, when imperative, see the authors (my name not being given), and so forth: thus . . . . . becoming a chief person, and at no great cost, and with a suitable addition to pay."

His association with the firm actually began in 1860, when at the age of thirty-two he succeeded John Forster, the friend of Dickens. He had already published three books, including his wonderful "Ordeal of Richard Feverel," and to judge from the genius which produced such a book, it can easily be understood how difficult he was to please and how tremendously high his standard was. From such a pinnacle his judgment was undoubtedly right and sound, even if it is said that it was unsound from the popular point of view.

He once wrote to a friend concerning the vocation of a novelist: "I think that all right use of life, and the one secret of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us; as to my works I know them faulty, think them of worth only when they point and aid to that end. Close knowledge of our fellows, discernment of the laws of existence, these lead to great civilization. I have supposed that the novel, exposing and illustrating the natural history of man, may help us to such sustaining roadside gifts."



With such an exalted view of the function of a novelist it is not surprising how hard he was to please, or that one of the first manuscripts he rejected was Mrs. Henry Wood's "East Lynne," of which he said: "Opinion emphatically against it." There is no room for doubt in his opinion here, and the publishers, acting on his advice, missed one of the most popular and successful books of the century. On the other hand, although he was not very enamoured of Anna Drury's novel "Misrepresentation," his opinion led the publishers to accept it. In his report upon it he left the publishers to decide for themselves. It ran: "If accepted, the title must be changed. I cannot recommend it, and though it will hardly bring us credit, it will not do much harm. I don't find stuff in the story. It does not appeal to any special class; it has no high literary pretensions. Still, it is pretty, pleasant, well-meaning, and full of a kindly heart and brain." The title was not altered, however, and the story was popular at the time, and made a name for its author, although to-day Anna Drury is little known to novel readers.

In the same year two manuscripts were received from William Black, entitled respectively "Alec Grange" and "James Merle," probably his first attempts as a novelist, for his age would have been twenty at the time. Here is an instance of Mr. Meredith's ability for discovering talent in an author whose works he could not conscientiously recommend. Of the former he says:—

> "In its way very good—in the earlier part highly promising. I have not seen the concluding portion; but it is but a thin thread of story I have got as yet. The author's mind evinces strong sense and poetic perceptions; he has a remarkably clear style, and a power of giving soft pathetic touches, which I commend. He does not know much of life, nor has he the proper artistic feeling for the development of his characters in an interesting way. Write very encouragingly. Don't lose sight of him."

His opinion of the latter was sent direct to the author in a letter. "Book will not do," he says: "but the author strongly encourage. A man on whom to keep an eye." Later the book was sent again, having been revised, but it was not recommended for publication. "James Merle" was not issued until three years later, and appeared as Wm. Black's first published novel, whilst "Alec Grange" does not seem to have been printed at all—at any rate, under that title.

In the same year (1861) there is still another interesting and important entry against a volume of Poems by Edwin Arnold:—

> "I should say this man will do something. The collection of poems here is not of sufficient weight to justify any speculation in the book. The translation in hexameter from Bion is especially good. He should wait till he has composed a poem likely to catch the public ear. There is no distinct original mark in these poems: not enough to rely on."

In 1862 there are only two notable incidents: a novel by "Ouida" entitled "Villiers," and one by Mrs. Lynn Linton entitled "Isola," each having opposite the entry the simple but peremptory word "Decline." Mr. Meredith evidently had no sympathy with Mrs. Lynn Linton's opinions as expressed in her books. More than one novel was offered to the firm and promptly declined by him. Of the last sent to him in 1894 he said, "Very sour in tendency, hard in style. All forced, and exemplify the author's abhorrence of the emancipation of young females from their ancient rules. She has been doing this sort of thing in all directions. She has a certain number of readers. There are also many who are repelled by her. It seems to me there would be very many who would not relish the book."

During the 'sixties came two more manuscripts by William Black which did not satisfy, although the author was again encouraged to go on, as was G. A. Henty, whose story "Frank Tressilor" was returned with instructions to "encourage the author to send any future work."

A year or two later Mr. Thomas Hardy submitted a manuscript entitled "The Poor Man and the Lady," but no opinion is on record. However, Mr. Hardy some time back referred to the incident, and it is to be assumed that although the MS. was not up to the mark, it exhibited to Mr. Meredith, as did those of Wm. Black, an ability and genius to be encouraged which eventually matured and justified his interest in the author. It was Mr. Hardy's first novel, and has never been published, and its author has stated that only a fragment of the manuscript remains now. Mr. Hardy was invited to see the "reader" and had an interview in the offices of Chapman and Hall, in Piccadilly, when he received much good advice, he assured us, but advice, he added, that Mr. Meredith did not follow himself.

Mr. Meredith was not only conscientious in his opinions, but was willing and anxious to give help and advice to authors whose books, although good, required some alteration, from his point

of view, to make it better; or others which showed signs that encouragement to the author would be a good thing to give.

Frequent references to the discovery of Olive Schreiner's "The Story of an African Farm," and the part Mr. Meredith took in helping the author to make it more worthy of success, have been made from time to time in the Press. There are three entries in connection with Ralph Iron recorded: the first in 1881, when a manuscript entitled "Saints and Sinners," by Ralph Iron, is commented on unfavourably, but "Early part well written." There is nothing to indicate that this is "The Story of an African Farm" in its first state, although the title might serve for that book. In the next year "An African Farm," by Ralph Iron, has this instruction against it, "Return for revision," and later it is sent again and accepted. I have seen it stated that Mr. Meredith called upon Olive Schreiner, but I think it very unlikely. I remember Miss Schreiner calling at our office by appointment to see Mr. Meredith on more than one occasion in connection with the book. However, his treatment of his books. This can be supplemented by Mr. Meredith's opinion as to the manuscripts submitted. Of "A Song of Sixpence," he said, "Decline. But a clever man, who may do well. Send back with regrets and warm appreciation of its merits." Of "A Deputy Providence," he said: "It is readable—not up to the mark of Mr. Murray's promise; but his name appears to be rising. He forwarded the MS. to me, and I returned it for some corrections." Of "A Man of Genius," he outlines the plot in the following brief manner:—

> "It is readable. The situation has to be considered by you: The 'Man of Genius' is a novelist in poor case, living with a young woman, who is an angel in temper, beauty, and sweetness. A friend who loves the girl urges him to marry her. He declines. He besieges a married woman, who seems to be near yielding, but at their meeting next day dismisses him. He goes abroad. His friend proposes to the forsaken girl. She cannot accept him. The 'Man of Genius' returns in ghastly form. She welcomes him. They retire to rest together, and she lies thinking of her dead baby. There it ends. And such is the dish."

This & the following MS must be accused of every defect that goes to make a work of fiction unreadable. It has no literature & no story, & it is cursed with an itch at times to try the rhetorical swell upon the lowest vernacular — sentences a page in length, & entirely empty.

the point is Mr. Meredith saw merit in the book, and, as was his custom with beginners, took unusual pains to give Miss Schreiner his help and advice, and that she readily and graciously accepted them.

Many other instances of how Mr. Meredith saw in an author's work the making of a good book, or indications of the author's ability, have been cited by the authors themselves. George Gissing, for instance, has told us how his first book, "The Unclassed," was received by Mr. Meredith, and how he met him in Chapman and Hall's offices to talk over its shortcomings and merits, and how Mr. Meredith made many suggestions for its improvement; but in his second book he received still greater help. It was called "Isabel Claredon," and I well remember it first coming in to the firm in three volumes of MS. It passed through Mr. Meredith's hand two or three times, and when we finally decided to publish it, it had been reduced from three volumes to two.

Henry Murray, in his book, "A Stepson of Fortune," has much to say of Mr. Meredith and

That is a fine summary in a nutshell, which a lengthy review could not convey more clearly. But although Mr. Meredith usually contrived to say what he wanted to in a sentence, he found it necessary or advisable to dwell in detail on certain manuscripts. Indeed, he would often enter into correspondence with an author, and spare no pains to make himself clear, as will be seen in the following quotations.

To one lady he wrote:—

> "The chief fault in your stories is the redundancy of words which overlays them; and the chief hope visible in them is the copious youthful feeling running through them. Your characters do not speak the language of nature, and this is specially to be charged against them when they are under strong excitement and should most do so.

Would seem to have been written in sight of Tangier.

Nor are the characters very originally conceived, though there is good matter in the old Welshman, C. Rees. Your defect at present lies in your raw feeling. Time will cure this, if you will get the habit of looking resolutely at the thing you would portray, instead of exclaiming about it and repeating yourself without assisting the reader on in any degree. We certainly think that you are a hopeful writer, and possibly we have been enough outspoken to encourage you to believe us sincere in saying so."

The lady evidently replied and offered her opinion on the criticism, for a further letter was sent her from Piccadilly.

"Madam," it ran; "You speak of the exclamatory style as being, you think, essentially and naturally feminine. If you will look at the works of the writer of 'Adam Bede' you will see that she, the greatest of female writers, manifests nothing of the sort. It is simply a quality of youth, and you by undertaking to study—will soon tame your style. Interjections are commonly a sign of raw thought, and of vagrant emotion: a literary hysteria to which women may be more subject than men; but they can talk in another tongue, let us hope. We are anxious that you should not be chagrined by any remarks that we have made. There is real promise in your work; but remember that the best fiction is fruit of a well-trained mind. If hard study should kill your creative effort, it will be no loss to the world for to you. And if on the contrary, the genius you possess should survive the process of mental labour, it will be enriched and worthy of a good rank. But do not be discouraged by what we say; and do not listen to the encomiums of friends. Read the English of the Essayists; read de Stendhal (Henry Beyle), in French; Heinrich Zchokke, in German (Minor Tales). Learn to destroy your literary offspring remorselessly until you produce one that satisfies your artistic feeling."

A year or two later he addressed the same lady in the following terms:—

"The Reader of Miss J.——H.——'s tale of 'Anwyl Anwyl' presents his compliments to her, feeling profoundly guilty—for the blame of this long delay rests entirely upon him. He put the MS. aside after he had read it; his intention was to write a long chapter on what to write, blot, and avoid. He can say in personal extenuation that Miss H. could not possibly have made any 'commercial' use of the tale; and that if she had published it, it would have done harm to her reputation.

"The reader is in town on Thursday next, and, if it should please Miss H. to listen to few of his critical objections to her style perhaps he may be enabled to do her more good in that direction than if he attempted to write them down. Therefore, should she be willing to call at 193, Piccadilly, on Thursday, at four p.m., he will endeavour penitently to repair his shameful behaviour. . . .

"If Miss H. should prefer to avoid vocal criticism it shall be written down, but it will possibly not be so effective, and it may seem more severe.

"In making this proposal, the reader has taken an unusual course by which he trusts to be able to show his desire to expiate his previous carelessness."

A writer for whose work Mr. Meredith had real admiration, but who did not make a prominent name in literature, at any rate as a novelist, was Hannah Lynch. In the catalogue in the British Museum will be found many titles of novels, all of which are probably forgotten by now. But the present writer religiously collected all she wrote, and found in them those qualities Mr. Meredith praised. Most of these, if not all, were submitted to the firm, but the only one published by it was "Rosni Harvey," in three volumes. Mr. Meredith always spoke well of her literary ability, but could never be persuaded that her books would ever become popular. Of "Daughters of Men" he said, "Clever writing. But there is not much story, and not enough of action in it to carry the reader's interest . . . . By all means encourage the lady. She has real powers." On sending the manuscript again revised, he could not discover that much had been done; but "impress upon the lady her ability is appreciated." Of "Rosni Harvey" he said:—

"The lady has marked ability . . . . . .

Depends on imagination, where none exists.

There is little incident, redundant dialogue, no drama . . . . though the dialogues seem tedious, they are well written. The authoress is a lady of power and observation Her failure lies in her not sufficiently taxing her invention. There is not any complexity. Consequently . . . . there is no narration: all is evolved by dialogues. . . . . Many worse vols. of work than 'Rosni Harvey' are published. But I am obliged to tell you that I do not think it would attract readers."

A third novel, "A Prince of the Glades," he described as an "Irish tale . . . . The writer's ability does not seem to me to show so well in this instance. But the task of creating interest in Fenianism would try the cleverest pen: and the hero has Fenian fever. It pains me to say that, though she always writes readably, the subject and cast of the story are not likely to win public attention. Impress upon her that you speak as publishers who have to look to remuneration for their ventures."

There is no doubt Miss Lynch was an extremely accomplished and clever writer who never happened to hit upon a theme in fiction worthy of her powers. She published other books which were well received, notably her appreciation of George Meredith, which, perhaps, is the best piece of criticism in many ways, as it was one of the first, on the novelist; but we have reasons for knowing that she felt her failure to catch the public ear very keenly indeed.

Another author for whose work Mr. Meredith had a great admiration was Major A. B. Ellis. The first book he sent in 1882, entitled "Isles of Indolence," did not meet with approval, but subsequently came "The Land of Fetish," "History of the First West Indian Regiment" (which had to go back for the author to carry out suggestions made); "History of the Gold Coast" ("written with his plain but excellent pen. I should be of an opinion that it would be a standard history of the Gold Coast and our possessions about them. It is the one book on the subject"); and books on "The Ewe," "The Tishi," and "The Yoruba-speaking People of the West Coast," all of which met with his whole-hearted commendation. Major Ellis also sent two volumes, entitled respectively "South African Sketches" and "West African Stories." Of the latter he said: "Good, charged with local colour; not attractive to readers of romance, but curious, and the author's name as an authority with regard to those parts should help the book. If accepted, it must be with the stipulation that 'Mrs. Fizgibbon' be omitted. It is a *sine qua non*." If he had only added "James Peacock" also, how much better it would have been for author and publisher, and even for Mr. Meredith, too, for a West African trader named James Pinnock saw himself in James Peacock, and brought an action for libel against the firm, and Mr. Meredith was called as a witness. The trial created a good deal of excitement at the time. The ex-Prime Minister appeared for the defendants and Sir Charles Russell (afterwards Lord Russell) for the plaintiff. Sir Charles Russell commenced by asking Mr Meredith if he had ever heard of Pinnock. He replied, "Not since the days of my youth, when I learnt his catechism." Mr. Meredith made a good witness, but the case went against the firm. His evidence, however, afforded *Punch* an excellent opportunity for a clever parody entitled "By George!"

Major Ellis, by the way, was a relative of Mr. Meredith, but we do not suggest this biased his opinion in any way. Indeed, it may be said that neither friendship, animus, nor position influenced his judgment in the slightest degree.

For instance, here is his opinion on a manuscript sent to him by a friend:—

"On reading the MS. I was forced to the conclusion that I must not recommend it. Believe me, I regretted it; for I admire and could love the writer. I say earnestly it will be better to put the work by: read, meditate, and wait to produce another. She will in time do good work, for she has a head and that which spins the blood to generous fire. But it is not friendly to urge her to publish. Moreover, I doubt her getting pay for it . . . . She is too good to produce the popular rubbish: too young to hit higher moods."

To another friend he writes:—

"Your lexiconizing is clever, and I cannot go beyond it. But I would advise you strongly to renounce all classic compounds in a novel. They puzzle readers, irritate reviewers. Even when they come spontaneously, they are suita le only to certain works of learned humorists. I wish success to your novel."

This authors blow themselves out to do the business. It is a work of the flattest invention - incredible for lack of ingenuity and a possible verisimilitude. — ill-constructed forced — void of quality to horrify, amuse or interest.

Called 'humourous' by the author. Cockneyish dialogues, guttar English, ill-contrived incidents done in daubs, maintain the assertion.

The author evidently re-wrote the book, hoping to profit by Mr. Meredith's advice, for the following letter to him has been preserved:—

"Your re-writing improved the book, but it could do little for the story, because of an inorganic conception. However, the book is full of honest good things, full of promise, and you have only to work deliberately upon a plan coming from heart and brain in nuptial union; you will surely succeed. The matter is in you. I like the spirit of your verses, and they have a fine ring. Here again I would say, tie yourself to some special theme at present, and turn to generalizings and adjurations by and by. Preach not yet—I am ashamed to find myself doing it."

If only all friends of budding writers were always as candid!

In the year 1889 a collection of letters of Jane Welsh and Thomas Carlyle were submitted by a gentleman "acting as trustee for others," and no doubt was the collection published a few years back under the editorship of Sir James Crichton-Browne. Mr. Meredith's opinion on these will read with great interest:—

"The authenticity will hardly be contested. But a proof of genuineness that rests so much on a capitulation of domestic trivialities is not a recommendation. The first three or four letters, those of Jane Welsh as a girl, paint her thoroughly in her enthusiasm. Further, the touches on this or that young man, and other people, show us it is she, and have in that their value. Then we come to letters at long intervals, of no mark, without connection, chiefly, when not entirely, pertaining to commissions for the supply of household necessities. The account of the life at Cheyne Walk is thin by comparison with the published letters.

"I much fear that a chorus of reviewers would cause the public to shun this collection. The little in them concerning Carlyle would plead but poorly on their behalf. Carlyle's own letters are formal, quite in his tone, but with nothing of the inner man.

"I wish I could give a better report. My expectations were lively, and I am disappointed. But if you can just see your way to remuneration I shall be glad."

One of the most famous novels of its time was "The Heavenly Twins," which in the ordinary course was submitted to him for his opinion. The firm did not publish it for the reasons embodied in his report.

"The author," he said, "is a clever woman, and has ideas; for which reason she is hampered at present in the effort to be a novelist. Her characters have ideas, but are not made to express them, and are incapable of helping the story to move. Such story as there is pertains to their individual fortunes. There is no main current; Evadne would kill a better work with her heaviness. It matters little what she does—she has her ideas; the objection is the tedium in the presentation of her. The writer should be advised to put this MS. aside until she has got the art of driving a story. She has ability enough, and a glimpse of humour here and there promises well for the future—if only she will practise, without thought of publishing until she can narrate and sketch credible human creatures without harping on such traits as she gives them."

Nor did John Oliver Hobbes's first book, "Some Emotions and a Moral," strike him in the same way as it afterwards did the critics: "Written with some power to exhibit the emotions of the sex—mainly in the form of whims," was all he had to say of it.

A still more famous book of an earlier period also passed through his hands, and was dismissed with a "will not do." This was Samuel Butler's "Erewhon," and the author has told us in a preface to a recent edition of it how he "took the book to Messrs. Chapman and Hall on May 1st, 1871, and on their rejection of it, under the advice of one who has attained the highest rank among living writers, I let it sleep till I took it to Mr. Trubner early in 1872. As regards its rejection by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, I believe their reader advised them quite wisely . . . . I hope; if I had been their reader and the book had been submitted to myself, I should have advised them to the same effect."

Mr. Meredith's interest in all that concerned Germany brought his mind to bear minutely on a book on Bismarck. Apart from the value of the criticism, as such, on the book, it incidentally exhibits his knowledge of the subject of the manuscript and his times:—

"The anecdotal Biography of Bismarck would be promising if it were rather more put into shape. The reader is wearied with the gossipy harking forward and back. As there is nothing else of the kind at present, it is worth while for some trouble to be taken to describe the parts currently. First, Bismarck's struggle with the Prussian Chamber to get an increase of the army; then the Bohemian campaign, rapidly, but in progression; then his difficulty with the King, to

prevent him from taking his conqueror's due of Austria—in view of the war with France to come. His dealings with Benedetti are very interesting. Two pages might be given to his management of the Treaty of Nikolaberg. Again with Benedetti before the war of 1870—I don't know what use has been made of the book by Busch, or whether it is legally permissible to levy contribution on it. Look to that . . . If you come to terms with the author of the Bismarck, I may be able to help with an anecdote or two, for which I can vouch."

Nature books appealed to Mr. Meredith, but only if of real distinction. He appreciated Charles Dixon's ornithological books up to a point, but ultimately complained that he wrote too much. He had admiration for the works of Robert C. Leslie. "A Sea Painter's Log," "A Waterbiography," "Old Sea Wings, Ways, and Words," "The Sea Boat"—all met with his full appreciation. "Excellent and pleasantly suggestive . . . . . you are safe in this writer's hands," he wrote of one of them, and of another: "I have an esteem for this writer's work. The present one has permanent value, and is interesting, besides useful, to read by yachtsmen and the general public"; and of a third he said: "I find it interesting and readable . . . . Mr. Leslie writes of fresh or salt water and of boats in a way to create interest in all classes of readers, young or old."

He delighted in W. H. Hudson's nature books, and recommended "A Naturalist in La Plata" as "Excellent, well observed or gathered—instructive"; of another he wrote: "Instructive and pleasant to read. There is a taste for books of this kind . . . . the present writer has a manner of his own and a known name."

Mr. Hudson—a fact not generally known, I believe—joined the ranks of the novelists during the "three volume" days, and two of his novels were submitted to Mr. Meredith, neither of which he could recommend, although one, which was published by the firm under a pseudonym had "good points—shows an observer of exterior London life. But he is not a creator. (The heroine) is a good girl, too good. Some scenes of the 'tempers' of women are true to life. A long work, with a mass of dialogue, little incident."

The chief character of the other ultimately appeared in a now popular and clever book of the author, at any rate so far as the name is concerned and sets one wondering if the books are identical.

And so in the course of his connection with the publishers, Mr. Meredith must have read hundreds of MSS., good, bad, and indifferent. As a rule his reports were short, couched in a sentence, laconic, witty, or sarcastic, but always clever.

Here are a few specimens culled at random:—

Feebler stuff than this might be written, but would tax an ape.

According to the dates given this was done in a month. It has no other merit.

Written in a queer old maundering style, poor stuff, respectable in the mouth of one's grandmother. He may have something to say, but he harps on the platitudes familar to the ears of infancy.

It reads like a boy's nightmare dream and written by a boy.

Dreariness of verse has hardly ever surpassed this collection.

Elaborately done, with index to contents of chapters. After going through some and running over the others, I found the index to be preferable.

Weak wild stuff. MS. looking as a survival of a dozen shipwrecks.

Anstey might have made the subject amusing. This writer is an elephant. Such themes can only be made interesting when they are treated airily.

This is laughable enough in MS. But in print the ridicule would fall upon the publishers.

Poor story of the French Terror. Historical portraiture befitting the pen of an urchin fifty years back.

Must be accused of every defect that goes to make a work of fiction unreadable . . . . it is cursed with an itch at times to try the rhetorical swell upon the lowest vernacular.

Would seem to have been written in sighs of languor.

Called "humorous" by the author. Cockneyish dialogue, gutter English, ill-contrived incidents done in daubs, maintain the assertion.

A tale reading as if told by a romantic grandmother of the present generation.

Absurd in point of style, which is that of a child.

Of a history of Bread he observed: "The subject could hardly be lively, but the writer might have given it more yeast."

The subject could hardly be lively, but the writer might have given it more yeast. I doubt that this kind of plodding book would claim attention

PEACE.

By F. BRITTEN AUSTIN.

Author of "In Action," "Battlewrack," etc.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

"ACHTUNG!" said a sergeant, gruffly. "Less noise there!"

The irregular trench, traversed at short intervals, was choked with close-packed men, above whose deep-helmeted heads a bayonet glinted faintly here and there in the twilight. The first stars were beginning to appear in a night that would be moonless. Non-commissioned officers pushed their way through the throng, verifying the equipment of their men, emphasizing final warnings and instructions. The men stood in stolid silence, their faces haggard and dirty under the deep helmets which all but hid them, the faded grey of their uniforms yellow with mud where a sergeant's torch flashed on them for a moment. They shivered in the chill of the evening. Some coughed nervously. All were obviously tense, high-strung.

Every man in the trench wore the same serious, determined expression. The methodical precision of their movements spoke of long habit in the performance of tasks whose gravity was capital. Death, in a few minutes, would be only warded off by the death they dealt; might strike them blindly even then, despite their most scientific precaution. Yet there was no revolt on the faces of these men. They were set in a gloomy fatalism that overrode the tremors of the quivering body, the fatalism of men inured to the unchallengeable caprice of the Death that ruled their world and lurked, at all times ready to swoop, beyond the sandbagged wall. Sooner or later, in one of countless ways, it would strike. However many perils they had survived, they were hopeless of any other end. A peace rumour had long ceased to be other than a subject for savage mockery. The war was an eternity that had claimed their temporal lives. Yet was the instinct undiminished to fight to the last for their continuance.

There was however a special bitterness in their sombre souls as they prepared for the night's work.

"*Diese verfluchte Amerikaner!*" said one of them suddenly, in a tone of murderous hatred, as he tested the edge of his trench-knife against the palm of his hand. "Without them——!"

A growl of unanimity went up from the close rank between the traverses.

"Silence there!" said a sergeant, in a sharp, low voice. "You, Müller! You'll have a shell into us!"

The man addressed grumbled to himself as he put the knife into its sheath, yet fully aware of the justice of the inhibition.

The night was deadly quiet. From these American trenches which, after a brief hurricane bombardment, they were going to raid, came no sound. The slightest noise from them would have been significant to their ears, strained to a more intense pitch of acuteness than they realized. Far back behind them a gun spoke with a gruff double report, a shell came whining dolorously overhead. The sharp crack of a rifle somewhere along the trench was followed by the hammer-tap of a machine-gun. These sounds left no register on their consciousness; they were part of their habitual environment, as normal as the song of birds to the ploughman. Their attention was focused on those silent trenches, masked by the near sandbag wall, which they knew awaited them at the other side of the desolate, shell-pitted stretch beyond the tangled wire—was held in suspense for the commencement of that furious bombardment whose cessation would be the signal for the plunge.

A flare went up from somewhere along the line, the first of the evening. The enemy's? The signal for the artillery? They waited, holding their breath. The silence continued.

The officer in charge of the raiding party stood, restless and anxious, in the angle of a traverse. From time to time he glanced at his watch and, as he raised the phosphorescent dial close to his face, Müller could see his boyish countena nce faintly illumined in the glow.

Suddenly there was a murmur of voices farther along the trench out of sight. A runner emerged from it as he squeezed himself round the traverse, rushed up to the officer.

"Herr Leutnant! Herr Leutnant! A message—from battalion headquarters!"

Though spent with what had evidently been an effort of speed through the obstructed trenches, he saluted as he handed over the envelope.

The lieutenant tore it open, flashed his lamp cautiously upon the sheet. Then his head jerked up in a wild cry, a laugh that was not the laugh of mirth but, apparently, of delirium. The men set their teeth in savage wrath at this reckless drawing of the enemy fire.

"*Peace!*" he cried. "PEACE! All offensive operations are cancelled. It's all over!"

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He laughed boisterously, vacuously, like a man whose mind has been overthrown. "The war is over! Peace is signed! Do you hear?" He yelled it at them as though exasperated at their apathy. The rank of men did not move; stared at him with the respect the German army enforces towards an officer even if he is plainly lunatic. The officer pulled himself together, reassumed the normal tone of curt authority. "Sergeant, the sentries will be posted as usual. No man is to be allowed out of the trenches. No shot is to be fired except under the direct orders of an officer. White flags are to be hoisted above the parapet at fifty yards interval. White flares will be sent up frequently until the enemy has displayed similar flags. The strictest discipline will be maintained in your section."

The sergeant saluted.

"*Zu Befehl, Herr Leutnant.*"

The officer hurried round the traverse, disappeared. The sergeant stared after him. Then, with a deep breath, he turned to his men.

"*So!*" he said. "*Da ist's!*"

They looked at him from their unbroken rank in silence. This was incredible—fantastic. The end of the war! Like this—without warning—at any moment when the attack was ready to spring? The end? Peace? —Reprieve? The genuine ring of the curt orders compelled a credence refused to the wild assertion.

"*Mein Gott!*" Müller heard the ejaculation before he realized it was his own. This vast event appalled him. The thing was too big to grasp. The others exchanged furtive looks under their helmets, each trying to model himself on his comrade. They shuffled awkwardly, glanced sheepishly towards the sergeant, at a loss for word or act. Their presence here was suddenly bereft of purpose. An epoch of timeless age had come to an end. The new had not yet begun.

A ragged cheer at a little distance along the trench whither the officer had disappeared sounded an awakening note of reality. The sergeant rose to this historic moment.

"'PEACE!' HE CRIED. 'PEACE! ALL OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS ARE CANCELLED. IT'S ALL OVER!'"

"You think you can do as you like now, I suppose!" he said with the jeering brutality of the petty tyrant. He glared at the patient squad as at so many victims, was about to continue when he stopped—cocked his ear.

Far back a gun had boomed. They heard the wailing passage of the shell with a new acuteness—a sudden terror, a sickening collapse. Not true after all? A dream? Madness of the Leutnant? They listened, fixed in their attitudes, in an agony of apprehension—second after second. No other detonation followed. There was no sound from the enemy trenches. The silence was unbroken. They did not even hear the shell explode. They strained their ears. Not a gun spoke in all the wide night. *They had heard the last shell.* The memory of its sear across the dark sky was suddenly vivid in them with its full significance—*the last!*

The man Müller filled his lungs as with a new atmosphere. Something seemed to drop away from him. The savage who had fingered the knife, who had lusted for blood, was suddenly foreign to him. He felt bewildered. A vast pendulum on which he had been swinging for an endless time had suddenly stopped. His first sensation was of an immense, a crushing fatigue. Sleep—oblivion; it was an imperative need of his being. To-morrow he would face this overwhelming fact. Sleep—unbroken by alarms—so much he grasped from this immeasurable boon that had at last descended upon a world grown sceptic of its appearance.

It was not to be. He heard the sergeant detailing his men, found himself assigned to sentry-duty. The others stumbled off to execute their orders, returned with the articles they had been told to fetch.

Farther along the trench the white lights were already soaring up, amid wild shouts, tumultuous cheers. They also cheered—cheered like madmen, intoxicated with their own clamour, in an overmastering frenzy that gushed from the bottom of their souls, their loudest vociferation yet inadequate to express this vast relief they were now beginning to comprehend—as their first flag was planted upon the parapet, showing sharply silhouetted above their heads in the brilliance of the first flare. Müller caught himself half expecting a rush of excited Americans into their trench, cordial handshakes, mutual enthusiasm.

But flare after flare soared into a night that echoed no cries but their own. The American trenches lay silent out of sight, firing no shot, uttering no sound. A regularly spaced row of flapping flags now surmounted the parapet, were illuminated by incessantly soaring, curving flares. The sky was white into the far distance on either hand with a radiance of similar origin. Still the American trenches gave no sign of life. The German soldiers crowded on to the firestep, gazed towards them with eager curiosity. A row of flags, reflecting whiteness as they fluttered in the blanched glare of the falling lights, surmounted them also, were the sole evidence of occupation.

Exasperated by this obstinate silence, a German soldier seized a megaphone, shouted with all his lungs across to them in English:—

"Hi! You Americans! It's peace! peace!"

There was a pause. Then a megaphoned reply came booming across: "We know. We won't hurt you!"

Baffled by the sarcasm, the German soldiers renounced the attempt at conversation, congregated in little groups to excited talk among themselves. What they were going to do when they returned home—it was one theme with infinite variations.

Müller stood at his post, breast-high above the parapet, gazing across that strip of ground which so long had lain under the ban of terror, scarce to be spied into, to be entered only furtively by the grace of a precarious darkness, death cheated at every moment of sojourn. Though the menace was removed, its desolate solitude was still sinister. In all the months and years of war how many multitudes had surged across it, uniformed in the fashion of the moment, shouting in the different tongues of many lands, their faces contorted with the passion and the fear of the death-conflict; how many had been annihilated in the spasm of their own murderous thrust, how many had flung up their arms in one wild cry upon a woman despairfully vivid for them, how many had wrestled desperately—body to body—for a dear life that was denied; how many had lingered, inexorably doomed, through the eternities of blazing sun, of frost-chilled nights, hung on the tangled wire whose hold they could not loosen, prone in the shell-holes they could not scale!

It lay now in an uncanny silence after its long torment of vicious shell-bursts, of every kind of violent detonation, a place of horror abandoned to its dead. The last cry had ceased from the trenches which enclosed it; the last flare had spluttered into darkness.

Müller shuddered in a sudden, unwontedly acute perception of the dreadful futility of it all. Solitary there in the night, he was appalled with the magnitude of the destruction which had been wrought. His mind revolted from it. Peace! He breathed a sigh of thankfulness—a thankfulness which ignored responsibility and retribution. He thought of his own home in the German manufacturing town, of the harmless interests he had forgotten. An immense longing for comradeship welled up in him: a comradeship that should know no distinction of race or speech, a comradeship that was the full reaction from this bitter enmity in which he had lived so long. He glanced across to the silent American trenches, their regularly-spaced flags darkly silhouetted against the luminous blue-black of the horizon, and longed for dawn and the human confirmation of the pact.

He had been relieved, had had some two hours of sleep when the trench awoke again to life in the first grey of the morning. He opened his eyes with the haunting consciousness of some great happening just over the rim of memory, the vague sense of a destiny recently and definitely changed. His partially roused brain

could not at first recall the circumstances, was baffled by a feeling that he had awakened to just such an emotion once before in his life. He fixed on that feeling of the past as a clue to the present, queried possibilities. The morning of an attack? A cold thrill ran through him, his stomach sank, at this only too apt probability. Then, in a sudden revulsion, the truth flooded in on him. *Peace!* Wonderful—miraculous—peace! A pertinaciously scientific little portion of his mind at the same moment identified the previous emotion with which he had felt the analogy—it had been his wedding-morning. And now the two memories coalesced and reinforced each other—peace, his wife—home!

"*Mein Gott!*" he murmured, staring straight before him without stirring from his niche in the parapet of the trench. "*Lottchen!—die Kinder!*" He stared at his rose-hung house that he had left—how many ages ago?—on that hot summer morning, saw Lottchen in tears turning away from him, snatching up the youngest-born in a passionate gesture of despair, as he waved farewell. He was overwhelmed with this incredible certainty that he would return to it—to happiness—permanently. He felt like a man waking from a vivid dream of the condemned cell, execution imminent, to reassurance of continued life. A great gush of affection for his wife was unsealed in him. He yearned out to her, to the children, to home. He visualized his return; thought, with a little glow of vanity, how proud she would be of him with his Iron Cross, with his participation in so many victories. It was something after all to have fought in the war. Now, of course, the thing to do (his mind reverted to the Americans in their trenches) was to shake hands, to start business again. He did not know the terms of peace, but he felt comfortably certain that a German who had fought brilliantly against so many embattled nations was assured of the respectful admiration of the entire world.

These thoughts were cut short by the clamour of voices, the rush of many feet just outside. The company was falling in. He rose, stiff with rheumatism, from his earthen couch.

At first, despite the murmured protests of the men, they were not allowed to leave the trench. The officers awaited orders. Over the parapet they could see groups of slouch-hatted Americans interring the dead on their side of the No Man's Land. From the long row of eagerly curious German faces who watched them came a continual shouting of English words that elicited no response. Müller found himself searching his memory for scraps of that vocabulary he had learned in a short stay in England, years before. He craved to take part also in this demonstration of friendliness, impelled perhaps by an obscure desire to make quite sure that this new era of peace applied to him the individual, that his personal danger was past. He felt jealous of the man on his right who insisted on explaining to him that he had lived many years in America, and that he was going back to his old friends and business.

"*Ach*, Müller," said the soldier. "America! What is that for a country? It is a freedom you have no idea of. No interfering police. No conscription. No crushing taxes. No officers treating you like a dog. Nothing to prevent you thinking what you like, saying what you like, doing what you like—except, of course, that you cannot commit crimes as you like. Plenty of money. The first year I made——"

"*Ja, weiss schon,*" said Müller, curtly. "And you are going back, Könnecke?"

"Sure thing!" replied his comrade, in American; then, in German: "I take the first steamer back after I am demobilized."

At that moment an Unteroffizier came along and gave permission for the men to leave the trench. They also were to bury the dead in the neutral ground. The Germans streamed out through lanes snipped in the rusty wire, leaving their weapons behind them. For the first few moments in the open they realized anew that impressive, continuing silence of the guns, were awed into hushed voices, their movements furtive in the strangeness of this unthreatened exposure among the shell-holes at which yesterday they could not have dared a direct glance.

The Americans continued to work on their side of the ground, glancing towards the approaching Germans with a brief laugh and word among themselves as they delved among the heaps of earth. Könnecke went straight towards them, and Müller felt that he could not do better than to attach himself to this experienced ambassador. He wondered what would be that first word from their late adversaries which, with Teutonic sentimentality, he felt would typify the resumption of international relations. A compliment on their military prowess? He prepared himself for a courteous reception of this most probable salutation, framed for utterance an elegant phrase of reciprocal esteem.

Könnecke headed directly towards a tall non-commissioned officer who stood superintending the excavation of a long grave. Müller followed close behind his comrade.

"Howdy, sergeant!" said Könnecke, confidently, in his best American accent. "Guess you'll be glad to get quit of this undertaking business?"

The American favoured him with just the smallest fraction of a glance under his eyelid. "No," he replied, coolly, "I'd bury quite a lot more of you."

The German was disconcerted by the level, unemotional tone of the snub. Nevertheless he grinned in a fashion meant to be ingratiating. Müller's high anticipation sank. After his imagined heroics this matter-of-fact reception was humiliating. He resented this cool barrier of reserve, was exasperated into a blind desire to penetrate it. At the back of his mind was the explanation that the American was too dull to appreciate the wonderful qualities of the German soldier. Könnecke spoke again before he could finish his slow preparation of a fitting phrase.

"Reckon you'll be sure glad to get back to the old States," he ventured, renewing his grin. "This is no country for a white man

--say now." He glanced over the desolation of the No Man's Land.

The American also glanced over his environment.

"That's so," he agreed.

"I'm going back myself," pursued Könnecke. "First steamer that leaves Hamburg—back to my store in Cincinnati. I'm going right back to God's own country—a sure-enough American citizen first thing you know."

The American turned slowly on his heel and faced the grinning German. He surveyed him deliberately from head to foot. Könnecke waited complacently through the pause, as though expecting a pat on the back.

"You're some optimist!" said the American, grimly. With an abrupt movement he seized Könnecke by the shoulder, spun him round so that he looked down the dreary vista between the trenches. The battle-lines in this area had met in a village, but of that village there was nothing more than a few heaps of pulverized brick scarcely to be remarked on the naked desolation of the ridge. "See here!" continued the American, with a sudden viciousness in his tone, pointing to that obliterated village. "*That's you!* I guess the States can get on very well without you."

He released his grasp so brusquely, that Könnecke, dazed by this sudden hostility, stumbled and all but fell. The American strode off. Müller looked after him for a moment, then, on a sudden impulse to put himself right with the world—personified at this instant by the American non-commissioned officer—followed him and overtook him. His virtuous indignation was a stimulus to his remembrance of the English tongue.

"Stop, sergeant," he cried. The American swung round, disdainfully awaited what he had to say. Müller had his first sentence glib. "You are not just to us," he said. "Germany fought to defend herself against a ring of jealous enemies. We did not start it. Has not our Kaiser said it always? But our victories—surely they entitle us to—to——" he faltered, trying to think of the English for "our place in the sun."

The grey eyes of the American abashed him with their steady scrutiny.

"You've hit it, Mister Boche," he said, deliberately. "It's just them victories. This world ain't safe with a crowd in it that makes so darned sure of victories as you do. We've quit fighting. But I guess if you're calculating on shaking hands and kissing all round, you're in error. No, sir—the best thing you can do is to beat it to a quiet corner and sit there, and maybe in about a hundred years folk'll have forgotten about your dirty spies and all your mean underhand ways. Maybe folk'll forget about the women and children and old men you shot, Maybe folk'll forget about the wounded men you drowned, the villages and towns that ain't no more now than a bit of hell on earth. Maybe folk'll forget about Belgium and the *Lusitania* and all the rest. Maybe some day folk'll be able to think of a Boche without turning sick. But that ain't now—and America has got no use for a crowd like you. We just want to forget you. And I guess your other Europeans feel the same way about it."

He spat, as though in disgust at having been betrayed into such loquacity, turned once more on his heel and strode off.

Müller stood watching him like a man half-stunned. On this first wonderful morning every incident was pregnant with significance, and this sentence of banishment, though it came but from the mouth of a non-commissioned officer of their late enemies, was delivered with such reasoned deliberation, such calm superiority, as to impress him vividly. He felt suddenly homeless, friendless in a hostile world. He tried to banish the uncomfortable feeling. *They*—all the other millions on this planet—could not possibly decree an effective ostracism of the entire German people! The idea was absurd. He looked towards the crowd of his comrades insinuating themselves pertinaciously among the tall, soft-hatted Americans, and marked with resentment the contemptuous downward glance upon the round cap of the bullet-headed, under-sized figure no longer lurking behind his machine-gun in an entrenchment. He thought of the splendid fellows who had marched to war with him in the early days, was impelled to cry out in protest that these Germans were not typical, that the manhood of Germany was dead upon its battlefields. The behaviour of these degenerates filled him with bitter anger. Accepting no rebuff, making the most of the monosyllabic replies they received, they ventured to laugh, to become loquacious, determined to extort friendliness even though servility were the price of it. "*No use for a crowd like you!*" the phrase haunted him with its terrible accent of sincerity. After all the sacrifices—all the blood and tears—this! Hatred he could have accepted with pride, would have been a tribute—but this disdain that denied even contact! A cold fear invaded him.

Georg Müller leaned back in the corner of a first-class railway carriage. He was in civilian clothes—the same suit in which he had reported himself to the depot on the first morning of mobilization, years back. To-day he wore them again for the first time. The last demonstration of the wonderful military machine of which for so long he had formed part was to hand him back, neatly ticketed, that once familiar suit of clothes which now looked so strange. It hung loosely upon him; was no longer fashionable. But he wore it with a sense of luxury. This civilian attire was the outward and visible sign of his emancipation from the servitude which had crushed his individuality so long. He felt like a prisoner released from jail, returned to the world of the living, where his personal inclination once more had scope. A new life was beginning for him, a life that had been in suspense from that wonderful evening in the trenches when, all unexpectedly, the end had come.

"HE POINTED TO THAT OBLITERATED VILLAGE. 'THAT'S YOU! I GUESS THE STATES CAN GET ON VERY WELL WITHOUT YOU.'"

Leaning back, with closed eyes, he recapitulated the event—slurring over the episode of the American sergeant's rebuff which persisted, not to be abolished, in his memory—tasting once more the joy of marching away for ever from that ghastly battlefield—angry once again at the suddenly hostile attitude of the French population in their concentration area; it had been impossible to purchase any of the ordinary dainties of life, and a strict order had enforced the utmost correctness of demeanour towards these surly hosts no longer constrained to courtesy—thrilling once more with the jubilant enthusiasm of the train-load of soldiers returning to the Fatherland—bitter at the long administrative delays which had adjourned their final demobilization. But now it was all over. He was himself once more—

no longer a mere number in field-grey, but a husband and father hurrying back to his wife and children.

Once more he was to take up the task of earning a livelihood for them. This thought appeared suddenly at the tail of his idle reverie as it had recurred again and again in every quiet moment since the first morning of peace. Work and earn! It was a necessity that would bear no postponement. His little capital had almost all been spent in keeping his family alive during the famine prices of the years of war. He would have to start afresh. Once more, as he had done a dozen times already on the journey, he drew from his pocket a letter from the director of the factory where he had been works manager.

"Dear Müller," it ran, "I much regret that I cannot give you an idea of when we shall re-open. We find it absolutely impossible to procure raw material, and even if we could get it our foreign agents inform us that it is hopeless to expect to trade until the prejudice against us is abated. It is a terrible situation. The working classes here are almost desperate. You may rest assured that at the first opportunity we shall again avail ourselves of your services ——"

Müller re-read the letter, though long ere this he could have repeated it word for word. But in the uncertainty of his prospects his mind derived a gloomy satisfaction from this definite negative. What could he do? Emigrate to America? He remembered the American sergeant's words, the cold aloofness of the American troops, and rejected the idea. The situation was serious. He counted over his slender resources with a feeling of regret that he had ceded to the extravagant impulse to take a first-class ticket. He had not been able to resist the fascination—after all these years of cattle-trucks and third-class carriages—of travelling first-class as of old. It had seemed to him the re-establishment of his identity.

He put away the letter, picked up a newspaper. The first heading to catch his eye was "The Raw-Materials Crisis," in fat Gothic type. The article dealt at length and plaintively with the terrible disadvantage of German industry in its contest with competitors who, during the war, had seized the principal sources of raw materials throughout the world. An adjacent column described another crisis: "The Crisis in Shipping," and bewailed the fact that it was impossible to find cargo-space for the millions of tons of ready-manufactured goods which Germany had waiting for export. It showed statistically the immense diminution of the volume of the world's shipping since August, 1914.

"They can thank their damned U-boats for that," commented Müller with a curiously impersonal bitterness. He dissociated himself completely from those governing classes over whom he had no control, was rancorously hostile.

The train stopped at an important station. He left his hat on his seat to mark his proprietorship and went out into the corridor. A minute later he turned to see an imposing *Oberst* in full uniform, accompanied by a silk-hatted, frock-coated civilian—obviously a functionary of some sort—entering his compartment. Through the window he saw the colonel unbuckle his sword and throw it on the rack and then coolly remove the hat from the seat, preparatory to sitting in the corner. In a moment he had re-entered the compartment.

"Pardon, Herr Oberst," he said, politely, "but that seat is occupied."

The colonel glared at him.

"Sit somewhere else!" he replied, harshly, and prepared to take possession.

A blind fury surged up in the ex-soldier, the accumulated fury of countless brutalities hitherto unresented. He sprang at the officer, gripped his wrist in a hand of steel, and flung him violently out of the seat.

"I do not choose to," he said. His eyes met the colonel's in a glare of cold hatred that was almost insane in its sudden vehemence.

With a wild oath the officer leaped for his sword. He found himself once more powerless in an inexorable grip, forced down to a seat. Almost speechless with rage he noted the close-cropped head of his adversary, recognized him for a demobilized soldier.

"Choose!" he cried. "You think you can do as you like now, I suppose!—I'll teach you! Dog!"

Müller smiled grimly at this plagiarism of his sergeant's historic remark, this naive avowal of the standpoint of the ruling caste. With a new-found dignity he resumed his own seat. He felt curiously elated, as though he had burst some secret chain about his life, the elation of the suddenly-inspired pagan who has overthrown his gods. The colonel continued to glare at him malevolently, muttering to himself the while. Müller ignored him. The train had started. The next stop was his destination, would end the episode.

The colonel commenced a conversation with his civilian companion, and almost immediately the name of his native town awakened the ex-soldier's attention. Hidden behind his newspaper, he listened with a growing interest that speedily became acute. Apparently there was grave industrial trouble—wilful damage to shops and factories—mobs clamouring for work and food—rioting. He deduced that the civilian was a Government commissioner, the Oberst a newly-appointed military commandant of the area: both on a mission to suppress the trouble. With increasing alarm he heard them mention various localities that had been sacked. Thank God! his own house was in a suburb of the town. In all probability Lottchen and the children would not be molested. He let his mind dwell on the dear ones he had not seen for so many months. Another half an hour and he would be clasping them to his breast.

He looked out of the window and watched with impatience the countryside that seemed to roll back so slowly, pivoting on distant trees and churches. Here and there were factories in a cluster. He noted that no smoke came

from any of their chimneys. A few miserable-looking women were working in the fields, but generally the view was deserted. This emptiness of the landscape impressed him unpleasantly; the entire countryside seemed to be under a ban. His mind reverted to a clumsy schoolboy visualization of an Interdict; came back from it to the present. If the rest of the world had excommunicated the German—as it seemed—they would soon be fighting murderously among themselves for the means of existence, like marooned criminals on a desert island! He revolted from the prospect. He was utterly weary of strife. Peace—peace! He craved for it with all his soul. The war was a nightmare he wanted only to forget.

The train pulled up at his destination, stopped. He noticed an unusually large group of policemen on the platform as he descended from his compartment. A moment later he heard the voice of the Oberst behind him, shouting to attract attention. Involuntarily he glanced round, saw himself pointed at by the officer.

"Arrest that man!" cried the colonel. "Insult to the uniform!"

A policeman clutched at him. Müller flung him off in a wild, reckless revolt. He would not be stayed thus on the threshold of his home. He found himself fighting furiously with a group. Overpowered, he sank under a stunning blow from a sheathed sword.

Three policemen dragged him to his feet, haled him along the platform in the wake of the colonel and his civilian companion. He saw the local chief of police salute the Oberst, go with him through the exit, followed by a posse of his men. In the firm grasp of his captors, he also was hurried off the platform, through the lofty hall beyond.

As they emerged from the station into the Bahnhof-Platz the roar of an angry mob smote them like a squall. Beyond a clear space close at hand, where stood a couple of motor-cars, was a dense mass of people, who howled and shouted as they waved a forest of fists above their heads. Police, on foot and mounted, kept them back from the station-exit by desperate efforts that had constantly to be renewed.

"*Brot! Brot!*" came one insistent cry from the mob, dominating the chaos of vituperations, of senseless cat-calls, of vile words that were the simplest expression of bitter hatred. They surged forward again and again in tumultuous rushes, stemmed at last by the vigorously struggling police, only to break loose elsewhere.

The Oberst put his monocle into his eye, stared upon the mob with cool contempt. A shower of stones hurtled past him, shattered the station windows at his back. He turned to the chief of police.

"The town is under martial law!" he said. "Charge those dogs for me! Mounted men!"

The chief of police blew a shrill blast upon his whistle. A troop of mounted policemen trotted up, formed their ranks in the open space. Other mounted men joined them from the fringe of the crowd. The chief of police gave his orders. There was a flash of swords drawn from the scabbard, a curt command above the uproar. The troop put spurs to their horses. For a second the only sound was the clattering of hoofs upon the pavement, and then, in one simultaneous outcry, an awful tumult of angry oaths, of panic-stricken shrieks, of screams of pain echoed from the houses of the square. Müller gazed, fascinated with horror, at the terrorized crowd of men and women who fled blindly to escape the plunging horses, the swords that rose and fell. A lane was left open behind the charging troop—a lane strewn with prone bodies of men and women who endeavoured to raise themselves upon an arm and sank ere they could crawl away.

The colonel smiled grimly.

"*So!*" he said. "That is the way to pacify them, Herr Bruckmann."

The civilian functionary had turned white. He endeavoured to smile back, achieved only a grimace. The colonel did not wait for his reply. He went towards his motor-car, stopped with his foot upon the running-board.

"Bring that man along to the Rathaus!" he said to the policemen, pointing to Müller. Then to the civilian he added: "We will establish a court-martial there immediately!"

He disappeared into the car, followed by his companion. A moment later it was speeding along the track of the charging police, passed out of sight into the street beyond.

Several other policemen reinforced the group which held the ex-soldier, and in a compact body they set off across the square. The tide of the mob had now flowed back into it. The terror of the flashing swords, no longer immediately before their eyes, they returned, infuriated by the violence which a moment ago had struck panic to their souls, a savage lust for vengeance blinding them to all else. Howling for blood, hurling stones, striking with sticks, griping with clawlike hands, they surged around the little escort which fought its way forward step by step.

In the narrow street at the end of the square the police could make no further progress. Two of them held firmly on to Müller, half-dazed by his treatment, but, like a caged wild animal, ready to spring for liberty at the first opportunity. The group reeled against one another in the rushes of the mob, struck out right and left with their sheathed swords, dealing blows that felled at each stroke. Still they could not advance.

"A prisoner! Rescue! Rescue!" howled the mob.

There was an answering shout from the upper windows of an adjacent house Müller looked up to it. Men were flinging out furniture into the street below. He could just see the facia of the building above the heads of the crowd. It was a baker's shop that had been plundered. The dwelling house was now being put to the sack. One of the pillagers had found a rifle. He appeared now at the window, his face grinning triumph as he shouted a warning. The crowd fell back from the close-beset escort in sudden alarm. The sergeant in charge

whipped out an automatic pistol, shouted an order to his men to draw theirs, just as the shot cracked from the window. He fell in a heap. For a fraction of a second Müller felt his captors' grasp relax as they felt for their weapons. With a violent effort he sent both sprawling, snatched at the pistol of the dead man, sprang into the crowd.

A fusillade of shots came from the group of policemen, evoking another outburst of shrieks and cries from the mob surging back away from them. The police were now isolated in a stretch of empty street. They charged forward with drawn swords, pistols ready. With the unthinking instinct of the battle-trained soldier, Müller flung himself into the shelter of a chance doorway, fired rapidly, with practised aim, at the charging group. From the window above the rifle cracked repeatedly. From the mob came the quick reports of other firearms. For one minute more there was an empty space about the savagely-retaliating policemen, and then the tumult closed, raging, over the bodies of the stricken men.

From that point Müller lived the unreal life of a fantastic nightmare where one wild incident blurred into the next. He found himself borne shoulder-high along the street by the mob, acclaimed as leader by the latest of their impetuous whims. A hundred wild figures clamoured around him for the orders he gave swiftly, as by instinct. He forgot his home, his children. He was exhilarated with the sense of authority, uttered his commands with the sureness of a born leader who had suddenly found his opportunity. The passion of the crowd, in fierce revolt against all that had hitherto coerced their lives, was a white-hot flame in his so recently outraged soul. A quenchless hatred for that upper race which had squandered millions of lives as a vain fee for their ambitions, and succeeded only in rendering the German an outcast, dominated him like a mania. All that misery and suffering they had inflicted should now recoil upon those who gave the order—the great caste of Government officials and army officers. An end of it—an end of it; the words beat in his brain like an echo of the phrase he had shouted he knew no longer when. Their power must end here and now. The people—he and his like—had submitted long enough. The instincts of an ancestor who had fought behind the barricades of 1848 asserted themselves in him as his own as he led his howling, shrieking mob along the shuttered street towards the Rathaus.

In the open space before the building a company of infantry was forming to its front. A section of machine-gunners were rapidly assembling their weapons. Müller took in the situation at a glance. Another minute and the crowd would be exterminated. The revolt crushed at the outset.

He ran towards the infantry, crying :—

"*Kameraden! Kameraden!* Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I am a soldier like yourselves! A comrade!"

There was hesitation, doubt, among the men forming into line.

"Present!" shouted the officer, with a curse. The rifles rose irregularly to the horizontal. The machine-gunners were not quite ready. The officer opened his mouth for the final order. Müller shot him dead.

A moment later the infantry and the machine-gunners were overborne by the crowd which vociferously fraternized with them, cheered them, kissed them, shook hands with them, bewildered them in a clamour of male and female voices.

There was a crashing detonation from the other side of the square. Another company had formed line, had fired a volley indiscriminately into soldiers and civilians. A howl of rage overpowered the death-shriek of the victims. The soldiers who had fraternized flung themselves prone and opened a rapid fire upon their erstwhile comrades in arms; civilians and ex-soldiers formed the firing-line with them, snatching up the weapons of the dead. Machine-guns opened from both sides. The battle commenced.

Gradually the rioters and their scanty auxiliaries were forced back out of the open space. Müller found himself appealed to for orders by leaders of other sections of the mob as well as by his own immediate following. He gave them with quick decision. Machine-guns to the roofs of the houses. Snipers to the windows. The fusillade swelled in intensity with each moment as more and more of the mob procured weapons.

Still the Government forces held the open space in front of the Rathaus. Over the barricade which now closed the entrance to the street, Müller glanced cautiously at the line of prone soldiers who fired rapidly, ten bullets against one, at their concealed foes. He noted pieces of paper whirling across the ground in a high wind from right to left of the line and had a sudden inspiration.

"Fire the houses on the side of the square!" he cried.

A noisy crowd of men and women dashed off by back streets to execute the order. A few minutes later dense volumes of smoke were rolling across the square, blinding the aim of the defending soldiers. He saw them rise and retreat, misty figures in the smother of fumes, rose to shout his own men forward. Something struck him violently in the chest.

He awoke from vague dreams of suffering to find himself stretched across a dead body. Bewildered, he gazed around him. It was twilight. Ruddy reflections flickered on the gaunt skeletons of gutted houses, from the foundations of which smoke still welled in volumes. In his immediate neighbourhood all was deathly quiet, but from somewhere in the distance came rapid rifle-shots. He recognized his environment.

"These cursed Belgians!" he said, to himself. "That's another town fired to teach them a lesson! I hope they shot the mayor."

The illusion was complete. Waking from the coma of his death-wound, he was back again in

"THEY SURGED AROUND THE LITTLE ESCORT WHICH FOUGHT ITS WAY FORWARD STEP BY STEP."

the wild days of 1914; the familiar gutted town, the row of huddled bodies of women and civilians at the foot of the shot-whitened wall near the broken barricade, were unmistakable. He realized suddenly that he was wounded, endeavoured to rise in an effort to find his company or an ambulance. His failure brought the truth home to him in a thrill of horror. He clapped his hand to his chest.

"*Mein Gott!*" he murmured, despairingly, as he sank back, "and the Hauptmann said that peace was certain in a few days!"

As his eyes closed he wondered whether the twilight was of evening or of dawn.

On Record

by Wilson Macnair

Illustrated by A. Gilbert. R.O.I.

CAPTAIN ROLAND of the Royal Army Medical Corps placed the big wax cylinder he held in his hands very carefully on the revolving drum of the phonograph in his examining-room and then set the apparatus in motion. The apparatus was a good one, the best that money could buy, for Captain Roland was a rich man, and it ran noiselessly with the measured swiftness of well-cut gear wheels As soon as the apparatus had begun to revolve, Captain Roland turned to the patient who was seated in his room and ordered him to say "A B C" as loud as he could. The man made a very curious grimace; and then a whisper that was soft and toneless came from his lips.

"Just lie on the couch," said Captain Roland, "and make yourself comfortable."

The man did as he was told and Captain Roland covered him with a blanket. The man seemed utterly listless and his face was as vacant as the face of an imbecile child; it had none of the cunning of those who lose their reason in adult life. He closed his eyes at once, and then Captain Roland took up a position at the top of the couch and made some suggestion to the patient in a quiet steady voice. Captain Roland suggested that the patient was very tired, that he was going to sleep, that his eyes were moist and his limbs warm. Gradually a pink flush deepened in the patient's cheeks and he slept peacefully; in his sleep he seemed to have lost the vacant look that he had while waking. Captain Roland watched him for a few moments and then he asked, in commanding tones:—

"You hear me?"

The patient replied that he heard quite distinctly. Captain Roland then said that the patient was now able to speak and that all his loss of voice was only imaginary. He said it as a judge speaks of the excuses advanced by a convicted criminal. And the patient agreed that it was just as he said. The patient spoke in a good loud voice. Captain Roland then ordered the patient to repeat the alphabet and the multiplication table and "God save the King," and the patient repeated them all quite well.

"Now you may wake up," said Captain Roland. And he stopped the apparatus.

When the patient woke up he was dumb again. Captain Roland told him to sit down on the chair, and then he explained that only a minute before he had spoken easily in loud tones. The man's face showed sheer incredulity at this and he even smiled, because the idea amused him. He had been dumb for six months Captain Roland pointed to the phonograph and said that he would prove to the patient that everything he had told him was true. He took the wax drum off the receiving machine and put it on to another machine, and he set the second machine going so that all that had been said in the room was repeated down to the very sounds of Captain Roland's boots on the wood floor.

The patient listened to the machine at first with a look of amusement on his face, but that soon faded away when he got interested in the business. When the phonograph repeated the suggestions Captain Roland had made about feeling tired and drowsy, the patient got a queer rapt look in his eyes as though the suggestions were affecting him again. Captain Roland did not want that, so he recalled the man by telling him to listen very carefully to what followed; at the sound of his voice the man started just as a man starts from sleep

Then the phonograph repeated Captain Roland's question as to whether the patient had heard him, and answered the question in good ringing tones that made the patient gasp audibly. The patient gasped again when his voice was heard speaking to Captain Roland about the nature of his complaint, and this time he grasped his knees with his hands and rubbed them backwards and forwards in quick movements as though he were ill at ease. Captain Roland watched him closely. The patient's voice began to say the alphabet in ringing tones. Suddenly the patient jumped up from his chair; his hands clutched at his throat. He began to utter loud sounds that were inarticulate. Then his voice seemed to break.

"Oh, Great Scot," he cried.

Captain Roland said: "You can speak now?"

"Yes, sir," said the patient.

"SUDDENLY THE PATIENT JUMPED UP FROM HIS CHAIR; HIS HANDS CLUTCHED AT HIS THROAT."

Naturally enough, the news of Captain Roland's method of dealing with dumb shell shock cases spread and people came to find out about it and ask for instruction. That was all very well. But some of the people who came wanted more than instruction, as this story will show. One of those who came wanting more than instruction was Sir Ebenezer Vase.

Sir Ebenezer Vase was a doctor who had procured a very great reputation. In what manner he had procured it was not clearly known, though there were several explanations. Sir Ebenezer's friends said that his success was due to his brilliant pioneer work upon nervous diseases; his enemies said that it was due to a different cause altogether. The general opinion of men who were neither friends nor enemies was that scientifically Sir Ebenezer did not count. But then who had ever known a "bedside baronet" who did count scientifically?

Sir Ebenezer was one of those men who have a conspicuously long nose. The length of his nose gave him a cunning appearance which was increased by the smallness of his forehead. He had small eyes, too, of the twinkling kind, and large, restless hands. A peculiar habit of snorting at frequent intervals added, in the opinion of many, to the impression of sagacity conveyed by him. It was a fact that no patient who visited his consulting-room in Harley Street had ever been known to forget to leave his three-guinea fee.

When Sir Ebenezer came to see Captain Roland's invention, Captain Roland, who knew his visitor by name and reputation only, began to cherish all kinds of glad hopes. Captain Roland

was nobody in particular and it was, therefore, a high honour that a great leader of the profession should take an interest in his work. Captain Roland received Sir Ebenezer with gratitude and explained to him everything about the invention. He even demonstrated a case. He had made ready to demonstrate a second case, and had his beautiful noiseless apparatus running for the purpose when Sir Ebenezer, who had listened in majestic silence, held up his hand. Sir Ebenezer had seen and heard enough. So Captain Roland sent the patient, who had just come into the room, away again and prepared to listen to what Sir Ebenezer had to say.

Sir Ebenezer's speech, delivered in his big, booming voice, was after this fashion : " You, my dear Roland, are a young man with your way to make in the world ; I think that without undue boastfulness I may say that my way has been made. You have achieved, single-handed, an important discovery on behalf of the dumb soldier, but it will be difficult for you to present your discovery to the world without help. I mean that the fact of your youth and inexperience may prejudice your chances of obtaining a good hearing. It would be a thousand pities if your remarkable work did not secure the meed of attention due to it. I propose, therefore, if it is agreeable to you, that I shall associate myself with you in order to secure your rights. I will act as your scientific sponsor, nothing more. The work is yours ; the credit of the work belongs to you alone."

At the conclusion of this speech Sir Ebenezer blew his nose. His face wore a look of great benevolence, a look characterized by some of his acquaintances as a " three-guinea sniper." No fox settling down to the discussion of a fat duck could have looked more benevolent. Captain Roland experienced what he afterwards, in humility, described as the " feeling of a made man." Captain Roland said that he was deeply indebted to Sir Ebenezer and that he accepted the offer in the spirit in which it was made. He added that he was not a good writer and had been looking forward with anxiety to the preparation of a paper on his work. Sir Ebenezer at once eased his mind by offering to write the paper for him, and thereupon Captain Roland entrusted all his notes and case records to the care of his new friend.

Captain Roland did not hear from Sir Ebenezer immediately, but this circumstance aroused no apprehensions in his mind, because Sir Ebenezer had returned to London from France. At the end of a month, however, the prolonged silence began to disturb him a little, and he made up his mind to write a very polite letter to the great man suggesting that the time for action was ripe.

He had just come to this decision when his orderly entered the room with his mail. There were a couple of letters from home and there was his copy of the *Neurologist*. He read his letters and then sat down to study the journal. He opened it listlessly enough, but as soon as he read the Contents Table his listlessness disappeared. He shouted in his surprise and anger. One of the items in the Contents Table of the *Neurologist* was " Phonographic Treatment of Mutism due to Shell Shock, by Sir Ebenezer Vase." The name of Captain Roland did not appear at all in this article. At the end of the article was an announcement that Sir Ebenezer would lecture on the subject before the Royal Association of Medicine.

Captain Roland had all the faults of his enthusiastic nature ; he was easily downcast and depressible. The theft of his discovery by Sir Ebenezer depressed him so much that for a whole day he went about his work without being able to think clearly or decide what to do. On the second day he sat down in his room and thought the matter out. He realized during this process that he hadn't a scrap of evidence to show it was his work and not Sir Ebenezer's work, except the records themselves—and after all anybody might have records. At the very best he could only claim to have discovered the same thing as Sir Ebenezer had discovered and at the same time. And Sir Ebenezer's reputation would silence even that claim.

He rose up from these reflections and looked dismally at his beautiful machine. He took up one of the records in his hands and examined it with listless eyes. What hours of labour he had bestowed upon this work ! Almost automatically he slipped the record on the machine and set it going. His own voice came to him, clear and strong. . . . And then another voice came to him, saying : *" You, my dear Roland, are a young man with your way to make in the world ; I think that without undue boastfulness . . . . ."*

Captain Roland shouted again as he had shouted when he read of Sir Ebenezer's treachery. And he also thanked God that he had forgotten to stop the recording disc while Sir Ebenezer was speaking to him.

After that Captain Roland's face had a queer, quiet look that surprised even himself. He did not seem to be able to change that look ; he discovered that there were things in his character he had not guessed at. He packed the record away very carefully in much cotton-wool, and then he went to his O.C. and asked for four days' leave of absence to attend the meeting of the Royal Association of Medicine in London at which Sir Ebenezer was going to lecture on Mutism. His O.C. said that there would be no difficulty at all about leave of absence.

Captain Roland reached London the night before the lecture and he had a good long sleep after his journey. He arrived at the Royal Association of Medicine a little before the time of the meeting and he brought a large wooden box in the taxi with him. The Secretary of the Association, who was a friend of Captain Roland's, expressed surprise at the appearance of the box, and Captain Roland said that his surprise would be greater still when he discovered what the box contained. He opened the box and showed the Secretary his beautiful bright phonograph. The Secretary said : " But, my dear man, that is Sir Ebenezer's wheeze. He's scooped you on that."

" Has he ? " said Captain Roland, with such a

savage snap of the jaw that the Secretary looked at him in some apprehension.

Sir Ebenezer had a huge phonograph to illustrate his lecture and a whole row of wax cylinders which he had got together for the occasion. He had picked up Captain Roland's method wonderfully successfully. He delivered his lecture in his big, booming voice that was so effective as a means of silencing opposition; and his audience, which was very large and very distinguished and very bald-headed, was quite carried away.

When Sir Ebenezer sat down, some discreet applause was heard like the sounds of approval which occur now and then on great occasions in Nonconformist churches. The Chairman, who was also a distinguished bedside baronet, cleared his throat emphatically to announce that he was going to speak. He had just begun, "In my clinical experience——" when Captain Roland, armed with his box, pushed up the steps on to the platform and dumped his box down on the demonstration table. Captain Roland said: "I must ask you to defer your speech, Mr. Chairman."

The audience was much too startled to protest, and also, perhaps, too dignified. The Chairman, too, seemed frightened out of his wits; he sat down at once. Captain Roland fixed his gaze upon Sir Ebenezer, who was sitting beside the Chairman on the platform, and asked in a loud voice if Sir Ebenezer pretended that the method of treatment he had spoken of as his own was really his own.

"Certainly," said Sir Ebenezer, with great serenity. "I think that was understood to be my meaning."

Captain Roland bowed. He asked the audience to note what Sir Ebenezer had said. Then he declared that he, not Sir Ebenezer, was the discoverer of the treatment. He made the assertion calmly. Sir Ebenezer lay back in his chair and yawned a little behind his hand. The audience yawned, too, though some members of it seemed sorry for Captain Roland.

"I have my records here with me," said Captain Roland, and Sir Ebenezer yawned a little more. The Chairman, who had recovered his wits, cleared his throat. He was going to put an end to the trouble. But just then Captain Roland's phonograph began to work and Captain Roland's own voice was heard saying: "I am very pleased to meet you, Sir Ebenezer." Sir Ebenezer did not yawn any more.

Captain Roland stood back from the phonograph so that he could watch Sir Ebenezer more closely. Nor did he turn to look at the audience when Sir Ebenezer's great booming voice was saying:—

"You have achieved, single-handed, an important discovery on behalf of the dumb soldier, but it will be difficult for you to present your discovery to the world without help. . . . I propose, therefore, if it is agreeable to you, that I shall associate myself with you in order to secure . . ."

At this point, however, the colour of Sir Ebenezer's face

"HIS OWN VOICE CAME TO HIM, CLEAR AND STRONG. . . . AND THEN ANOTHER VOICE."

"SIR EBENEZER HAD RISEN TO HIS FEET. 'I DENY THAT THAT IS MY VOICE.'"

caused Captain Roland to stop the phonograph suddenly. Sir Ebenezer had risen to his feet. He said :—

"I deny that that is my voice."

Sir Ebenezer moved along the platform like a blind man and went out by the platform door. After the door shut the hall was quite silent. At last the Chairman cleared his throat feebly. He said that this meeting of the Royal Association of Medicine now stood adjourned.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

422.—ECONOMY IN STRING.

OWING to the scarcity of string a lady found herself in this dilemma. In making up a parcel for her son, a prisoner in Germany, she was limited to using 12ft. of string, exclusive of knots, which passed round the parcel once lengthways and twice round its girth, as shown in the illustration. What was the largest rectangular parcel that she could make up, subject to these conditions?

423.—MISSING WORDS.

A CORRESPONDENT sends me a quatrain, to which I add a couplet to bring in an additional word, as follows :—

Through . . . . . of the sea the tide is making;
Peaceful and . . . . . is the summer night;
But . . . . . to a voice the stillness breaking:
" . . . . . brave boys. Your country bids you fight,"
Better the gold of just and valiant strife
Than the mere . . . . . of a selfish life.

The five missing words contain the same six letters differently arranged.

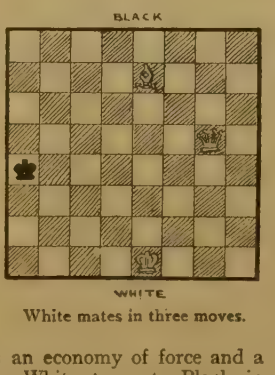
424.—THE SIX NOUGHTS.

A	B	C
III	III	100
333	333	000
555	500	005
777	077	007
999	090	999
2775	IIII	IIII

Write down the little addition sum, A, which adds up 2775. Now substitute six noughts for six of the figures so that the sum shall be IIII. It will be seen that in the case B five noughts have been substituted and in case C nine noughts. But the puzzle is to do it with six noughts.

425.—AN OLD THREE-MOVER.

THE modern three-move chess problem has been brought to a high state of perfection, having regard to such qualities as variety, economy of force, and difficulty, but it is refreshing to go back sometimes to simple specimens of the old school. The example I give, from an unknown author, certainly has little variety (that is, few variations) and is not difficult, but there is an economy of force and a pleasing strategy. How is White to mate Black in three moves?



White mates in three moves.

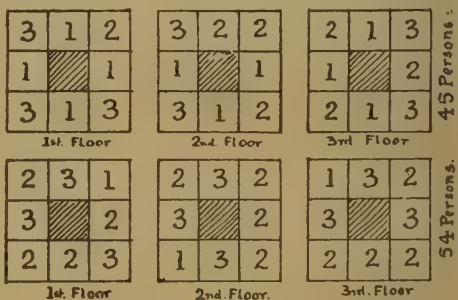
426.—THE PRINTER'S PROBLEM.

A PRINTER had an order for ten thousand bill forms per month, but each month the name of the particular month had to be altered; that is, he printed ten thousand "JANUARY," ten thousand "FEBRUARY," ten thousand "MARCH," etc., but as the particular types with which these words were to be printed had to be specially obtained and were expensive, he only purchased just enough movable types to enable him, by interchanging them, to print the whole of the months of the year. How many separate types did he purchase? Of course, the words were printed throughout in capital letters, as shown.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

418.—THE ALIEN BOMB-DODGERS.

THE total number of persons must clearly be a multiple of 3, say 45, 48, 51, or 54. If it is smaller than 45, some of the rooms must be unoccupied, and if larger than 54, some rooms must contain more than three persons. Therefore, as there was a difference



of nine between the two numbers, we must take the extremes, 45 and 54. They can be arranged in many different ways. I give one solution. In both arrangements there is the same number of persons on every floor, and, if we superimpose the three floors, there are nineteen persons on every side of the house.

419.—WORD CHAINS.

THIS is my way of converting ARMY into NAVY under the conditions :—

ARMYTHUSERSEALTOOLLANAVY.

All the eleven words will be found in Nuttall's Dictionary. "Olla" is a mixture and "Lana" is a wood exported from Demerara. I cannot say that a shorter chain may not be found.

420.—THE FOUR FOURS.

HERE is one way of expressing 89. $\frac{4! + \underline{4}! + \sqrt{4}}{4}$

I think the smallest whole number that cannot be solved under the conditions as to signs laid down is 113.

421.—FIND THE WORD.

THE word is ARE, a monosyllable that has three syllables when we add one letter and make it AREA. This word was printed just above in the example of "Word Chains," and it was while writing it that I remembered this little peculiarity that I had come across when recently turning over the pages of the "Ladies' Diary" for 1818—just a century ago. IDE—IDEA and SMILE—SIMILE are two other cases.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for October, 1918.

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"'GIVE ME MARIAN'S JEWELS,' THE PSEUDO-HUSBAND CRIED. 'HAND THEM OVER BEFORE I BLOW YOUR HEART OUT.'"

(*See page* 237.)

BLACKIE'S LITTLE PAL.

By JACK BOYLE.

Illustrated by W. H. D. Koerner.

THE room was faintly illumined by the intermittent flame of a wood-fire slowly dying on the hearth of an open grate. The house was silent, dark, seemingly deserted. Outside the dripping fog clung to everything in heavy, impenetrable folds that isolated the residence from its neighbours as though it stood alone in an otherwise empty world.

Inside the handsomely-furnished dining-room, and opposite the fire which now and then leaped up and cast his shadow in grotesque shapes against the ceiling, stood a man intently studying the panelled walls—a man with a white handkerchief masking his face and a coat that sagged under the weight of the revolver slung ready for instant use beneath one of its lapels.

The man was Blackie, a Raffles among crooks, who lived by pitting skill and daring against the best safeguards a property-loving world has devised for its own protection, and risking liberty and life on the issue of the game. Concealed behind the oaken panels he inspected so painstakingly was a safe in which lay the Wilmerding jewels—a famous collection. Blackie was there to make them his own.

He ran acutely sensitive fingers—sandpapered until the blood showed redly below the skin—over the woodwork, seeking the hidden spring he knew was there—for an incautious servant's remark had travelled up through the underworld until it reached Blackie, the one in a thousand expert enough to use it. Quickly his questing fingers located the key panel, and the door rolled noiselessly back, disclosing a steel strong-box.

"Ah, neatly arranged!" murmured the safe-breaker in an inaudible and satisfied whisper as he stooped and gently turned the combination-knob. It revolved without perceptible sound, but science is an impartial ally—the ally of able crooks as well as of those who war upon them. Blackie laid a tiny metal disc against the combination. Wires led from it to a transmitter he hooked over his ear. Then he turned the dial-knob again slowly and with infinite care. The audion bulb within the transmitter—science's newest device for magnifying otherwise imperceptible sound—carried to his ear plainly the faint click of the tumblers within as the dial crossed the numbers of the combination that guarded the jewels. One by one he memorized them, slowly but surely reading the combination that, once his, would enable him to open the safe, take the gems, relock the strong-box, and depart without leaving behind the slightest outward evidence that robbery had been done. The burglar smiled contentedly as he worked. Already he reckoned the Wilmerding collection of jewels as his own.

A faint sound from behind caught his ear. He straightened quickly, dropped the audion

bulb into his pocket, and slid the panel noiselessly back into place.

"A step on the stair!" he whispered, in sudden alarm. "And I was sure the house was empty except for the two servants asleep below-stairs—I counted them out one by one; and yet there's someone coming down from above. Coming down slowly, stealthily, too!"—as he heard a second cautious step. "Too bad! In another five minutes I should have been gone."

He drew his mask higher over his face and stepped backward into the shadow of the drapery before the window he had prepared for a quick exit in an emergency. Then he waited, listening with every sense alert, every muscle rigid.

Again he heard the step, now close to the doorway. Then in the dim firelight a small tousled head appeared—the head of a little child who stood irresolute outside the room, gazing fearfully at the dark shadows within.

The boy—a mere baby of four—hesitated on the threshold of the dark room, evidently trying to summon courage to enter. The safe-breaker from his refuge saw and read a conflict between fear and determination in the wide eyes of the little intruder. For a full minute the child hung back; then suddenly with a low cry, half fearful, half courageous, he ran across the room to the window and tumbled straight into the arms of the safe-breaker, of whose presence he had no inkling.

Blackie, fearing an outcry, spoke quickly, soothingly, but the boy neither screamed nor cried. He stared wonderingly for a moment into the kind eyes that looked down into his, and then, with a faint sigh of relief, involuntarily nestled closer in the protecting arms that held him—a lonely, frightened child finding comfort and consolation in the unexpected solace of human companionship.

"Who are you?" lisped the little fellow, smiling confidingly up into Blackie's perplexed face. Then, with suddenly increased interest: "You aren't Santy, are you? No, you aren't Santy, 'cause that on your face is a hanky, not a beard." He had reached up and given the partially disarranged handkerchief mask a gentle, inquiring tug.

Blackie smiled back at him.

"No, I'm not Santa Claus to-night, little man," he said. "Who are you?"

"I'm Martin Wilmerding, Junior, and I'm four years old," the boy said, proudly.

"You are! Well, well! And where is your mamma and your papa?"

"Papa's gone away, mamma says, and mamma's gone to a party; and when mamma was gone, then nursey went out too, and said she'd spank me if I told. John and Emily are downstairs sleeping, and I woke up and it was dark, and I was afraid—a little."

"So they've all traipsed off and left you alone for me to entertain, have they!" said Blackie, his eyes narrowing grimly as understanding of the situation came to him. "But what were you coming downstairs for? Looking for mamma?"

"Oh, no—mamma won't come for ever and ever so long. I was all alone and afraid, and I came down for Rex."

"Rex—who is he?" asked Blackie, quickly.

"He's my doggie, my woolly doggie. See, here he is."

The boy squirmed out of Blackie's arms, and pattered on bare feet to the window-seat, where he resurrected Rex from beneath a cushion. Then he hurried back to Blackie, and climbed to his lap with the toy dog clasped in his arms.

"Rex sleeps upstairs with me," the child informed his new-found friend. "But to-night nursey forgot him, and I waked up and remembered where he was, and it was so dark and I wanted him so bad, so I came downstairs for him. I ain't afraid when I have Rex, 'cause I can hold him close and talk to him, and then we bofe go to sleep. See, isn't he a dear little doggie?"

Unconsciously Blackie's arms tightened around the soft little body nestling contentedly against his breast.

"You poor, abandoned little kiddie!" he said, softly. "You poor little orphan! You're a little man, too, for it took real nerve to come down here after your pal Rex—far more nerve than I had to use to get in here."

"I like you. You're nice man," said the boy, with childishly intuitive understanding that the man in whose arms he lay was a friend.

Blackie looked at his burden in puzzled indecision. He hadn't the heart to desert his new-found pal, and yet he was a safe-breaker in a strange house, with each passing minute doubling his risk. Even the sound of their voices, low-pitched though they were, was an imminent danger. The boy, quiet and content, cuddled close to him, hugging his precious woolly dog.

"Hadn't you better run back to bed, Martin?" said Blackie, gently, at last. "Nursey will be back soon, and she'll be cross if she finds you down here."

The child clutched the arms that sheltered him.

"Y-e-s," he admitted, slowly. Then wistfully: "It's awful dark and quiet upstairs. If you come up and tuck me and Rex in bed, we'll be good and go right to sleep. Please."

"Of course, I will," said the safe-cracker, a bit huskily. "I'd do it if the whole house were full of coppers."

He rose with the boy still in his arms.

"You must show me the way, Martin," he said. "And we mustn't make any noise and wake John and Emily. Now we'll go."

They climbed the dark stairway together, and, the child directing, came to the open door of a big deserted nursery. A little empty bed revealed the refuge from which Martin Wilmerding, Jnr., had begun his perilous adventure in search of Rex and companionship. Blackie laid the boy down and covered him as gently as a mother might have done.

"Good night, little pal," he said. "I'm glad I happened to be here to-night."

The boy clutched his hand.

"Please stay and hold my hand," he pleaded.

"I'm going right to sleep if you will. Please, 'cause it's awful dark."

Blackie sat on the edge of the bed and took a tiny hand in his. The boy, with a sigh of perfect contentment, nestled snugly in his downy comforts.

"Good night," he said, drowsily.

"Good night, little pal," answered Blackie. Silence descended over the nursery as Blackie, with aching throat, waited hand-in-hand with the little Wilmerding heir, who was learning too soon that life's problems must be mastered alone and unaided.

Five minutes passed, and Blackie, looking down, saw the boy was fast asleep with baby lips parted in a peaceful smile, and Rex's fuzzy head tightly clasped to his breast. The safe-breaker gently withdrew his hand and smoothed the covers.

"Poor little chap!" he said. "Everything in the world that doesn't count, and only one real friend—Rex. Poor, lonely little chap!"

The safe-breaker crept noiselessly down the stairs to the room that contained the purpose of his visit. The fire had died to a few glowing embers. Again he rolled back the panelled door and exposed the safe. Again he adjusted the audion bulb and began anew the task of deciphering the combination. And again, with his work but half finished, there came a startling interruption—a short and a long blast from a motor-horn that sounded from somewhere out in the fog.

"Mary's signal! Someone's coming," he reflected, disgustedly. Quickly he drew a damp cloth from his pocket and mopped the door of the safe and the woodwork to destroy the possibility of tell-tale finger-prints, then once more closed the panel. He drew back into the comparatively safe shelter of the window-hangings, and waited.

"I'm going to have those jewels to-night if I have to stay here till morning," he murmured, resolutely. "I wonder who this can be? The nurse who slipped out on her own business and left that poor little kid alone, I suppose."

The faint purr of a motor stopping before the house reached his ears.

"That doesn't sound like a nurse to me," he thought. "If it's the mother of that boy, she'll be in here, likely enough, with all the lights on in a minute. Well, anyway, we'll wait and see what happens. The window's ready for a quick get-away. and all the coppers in town couldn't get me once I'm outside in this fog, with Mary and the machine ready. We haven't lost yet."

The whirl of the motor died, and voices sounded outside as steps ascended from the street.

"Two are coming—a man and a woman," murmured Blackie. "Matters are growing interesting."

The outer door opened and closed softly. In the darkness the safe-cracker "sensed" two dim forms in the doorway; then an electric button clicked, and the room was flooded with light. Blackie saw a brilliantly handsome woman, cloaked and in evening dress, and an equally handsome man similarly garbed. The woman let her wrap slip to the floor as she turned to her companion.

"What is it, Don?" she asked, apprehensively. "What is troubling you so? Tell me."

"The same thing that always troubles me," he answered, stepping towards her and taking her hands in his. "My love for you, Marian!"

The man drew her closer to him gently, but irresistibly, and his arm dropped to her slender waist.

"Your own heart tells you all that is in mine—it must," he added quickly. "Marian, dear, this torture must end to-night."

For a second, with his arm around her, she swayed toward him. Then slowly she released herself and drew away.

"Don't, Don, please!" she begged, tremulously. "You know we agreed not to discuss things that—that can't be remedied. Is this all you had to tell me? Is this why you have brought me home now from the dance where at least we might have forgotten and been happy for an hour?"

Her face, as she looked up at him, was a strangely mingled contradiction. There was reproach in her voice; there were tenderness and regret in her eyes, but behind them lay an instinctive womanly shrinking from something to be feared.

"Yes," her companion said, studying her face, "that is what I have come to tell you to-night; first that I love you; then that I am going away. Marian, I sail for Honolulu to-morrow morning on the *Manchuria*."

"Oh, no, no!" the woman cried, springing to his side and catching his arm in a movement imploringly detaining. "Oh, Don, you wouldn't! You couldn't! Tell me it isn't so. You say you—you—care; and yet you would leave me to face an empty life here—alone—in this house."

To Blackie, watching from within the window-embrasure, the sweeping gesture of hate that accompanied her final word was as revealing as a diary. It seemed to picture the luxurious home as a prison in which love and a woman's illusions had slowly stifled and died. It seemed the signed confession of an unhappy and embittered wife. And also, in its resentful recklessness, the gesture explained the man she called "Don"—the man who now gently drew her into his arms and tilted her head till she faced him squarely.

"It is true that I am leaving on the *Manchuria*," he said, "but it is not true that I am leaving you. Because"—as she stared up at him in breathless wonder—"Marian, dear, you are going with me."

A slowly rising flush coloured her white cheeks, and for just a second her eyes answered the fire and tenderness in his. Then she laid trembling hands against his breast, and slowly pushed him away as she bowed her head.

"It can't be, Don," she said, speaking so low the man stooped to hear her. "What you ask is impossible. I can never do that—never."

"And why not?" he answered. "Is it because of what our friends here will say? That for them and their gossip!"—snapping his fingers. "For a week idle tongues will buzz over teacups

"THEN SHE LAID TREMBLING HANDS AGAINST HIS BREAST, AND SLOWLY PUSHED HIM AWAY AS SHE BOWED HER HEAD."

and glasses. Well, let them. You and I will not be there to hear. We shall be together far out on the Pacific under a warm sun and a blue sky, with heartache for ever dead and buried beyond the horizon, and a lifetime of perfect happiness rising before us as you see the islands rise out of the sea. Hawaii is a beautiful land, dearest—a land that has no yesterdays. Are we to miss all that awaits us there, all that makes life worth living, because we fear chattering

tongues two thousand miles behind us? No! Dear one, we must both sail on the *Manchuria*."

He stopped, seeking a glimpse of her averted face.

"Why must you go?" she asked, her head still bowed.

"There is serious labour trouble on the sugar plantation. Michaels cabled me this afternoon. It is absolutely imperative for me to return at once, and the *Manchuria* to-morrow morning is the only steamer this month. I have taken passage, and I can't—I won't—leave you behind. Will you go, Marian?"

Slowly she shook her head.

"This, then, is the end, Don," she said. "You know I can't go, and you know, too"—her voice now was bitterly resentful—"that life will be a hideously empty thing to me after the *Manchuria* sails in the morning. But I can't go. I am tied here with bonds that can't be broken—by me."

"Do you mean that, Marian?"

She hesitated, and brushed a hand quickly across her eyes—then nodded silently.

"If you do," he continued, betraying the bitterness of his disappointment, "it proves one of two things. Either you are a coward, afraid to risk a momentary sacrifice to buy a lifetime of happiness, or deep in your heart you still love your husband. Which is it? Do you care for Wilmerding? Has my love been no more than a toy to amuse you in idle hours?"

"How can you ask that, Don?" she answered, quickly. "You know it hasn't; and as for my husband——" She stopped and stood staring down into the fire, her face altering with each of many swiftly changing emotions.

At last she looked up and into the eyes of the man beside her.

"I did love Martin Wilmerding once," she said. "Sometimes I have thought that if the past two years could be blotted out—forgotten—I might love him again even yet; but now, to-day, to-night, I do not love him. That is my answer, Don Lavalle. To-night I do not love him."

"How long has it been since you thought you might care for him again?" Lavalle demanded, jealously.

"Since you came into my life and taught me to care for you."

He stooped over her eagerly.

"You tell me that, and expect me to leave you here!" he whispered. "Never! In saying you love me, you have decided. Come Marian, come."

For a second their eyes met. His were eager, ardent, passionately tender. To a woman grown reckless through neglect, they pleaded his cause better than words. She crouched by the vanishing fire, weighing her problem. Behind her, Lavalle, intuitively avoiding speech, awaited her verdict. From his hiding-place Blackie watched, forgetful for the moment of why he was there.

Minutes passed—minutes in which Marian Wilmerding, choosing her future at diverging crossroads, relived her life.

The years behind her flitted one by one through her mind—years she saw as a nightmare of steadily growing disillusionment. She had loved big, handsome, debonair Martin Wilmerding when they were married. As a suitor he had stood out alone among the many men who had asked her hand. They had been very happy at first, were still happy when their boy was born. When and how had the present gulf between them grown? Memory told her. It had begun when she found the romance-haloed suitor she had married slowly altering into a husband who regarded her love as an irrevocably given possession requiring neither attention nor the refreshing nourishment of tender response. Time widened the breach. She had been morose, petulant; he had not understood, and had withdrawn more and more into a cycle of interests in which she had no share. She, hiding her wound, retaliated by plunging into the feverish gaiety of ultra-smart society. For many months they had lived as strangers, never meeting except occasionally at dinner.

And now she was facing the inevitable result—listening to the plea of a man for whom she had confessed her love, urging her to leave home and husband. What was the answer?

Her throat tightened in an aching pain as her eye fell on the thin gold band that encircled a slender finger. Martin Wilmerding had stooped to kiss that hand and ring on the day it first was placed there.

"Dear little wife," he had said, "that ring is the symbol of a bond that never will be broken by me. Throughout all the years before us, whenever I see it, this hour will return, bringing back all the love and devotion that is in my heart now."

Recollection of the long-forgotten words swept her with a sudden revulsion of feeling, and she sprang to her feet. In that instant she realized for the first time why she had come to love Don Lavalle. It was because in his fresh, ardent, impulsive devotion he was so like the Martin Wilmerding who had kissed her hand and ring with a vow of lifetime fealty that had left her clinging to him in tearful ecstasy.

"Don," she said, "if you really love me, go—now, now."

Lavalle's arms, eagerly outstretched toward her, dropped to his side. It was not the answer he had awaited so confidently. A vague resentment against her tinged his disappointment with new bitterness.

"That is final, is it, Marian?" he asked.

"Yes, yes. Don't make it harder for me. Please go," she cried, almost hysterically.

He slipped into his overcoat.

"Perhaps you will tell me why," he suggested, with increasing asperity.

"Because of the boy and this," the woman said, brokenly, laying a finger on her wedding-ring.

"Nonsense," he cried, angrily. "What tie does that ring represent that Martin Wilmerding has not violated a hundred times? You have been faithful to it, we know, even though you admit you care for me. But has he? I have not the pleasure of your husband's acquaintance,

but no man ever neglected a wife like you as outrageously as he has done without a reason."

"Go, please, quickly," she pleaded, shivering.

"I will," he said, instinctively avoiding the blunder of combating her decision with argument.

He caught her in his arms and, stooping quickly, kissed her on the lips. She reeled away from him, sobbing.

"Our first and last kiss. Good-bye, Marian," he said, gently, and left the room.

She followed, clutching at the walls for support as she watched him from the doorway. He adjusted his muffler and caught up his hat without a backward glance, and she pressed her two hands to her lips to choke back a cry. Then, as he opened the outer door, the crushing misery of her loneliness swept over her, overpowering self-restraint and resolution.

"Don, oh, Don!" she pleaded, stumbling towards him with outstretched arms.

In a second he was at her side, and she was crying against his breast.

"I can't let you go," she sobbed. "I tried, but I can't. Take me, Don. I will do as you wish."

From his hiding-place Blackie saw them re-enter the room. The woman stopped by the fireplace, drew off her wedding-ring, and after holding it a second between shaking fingers, dropped it into the ashes.

"Dead and gone!" she said. "Dead as the love of the man who put it on my finger."

"My ring will replace it," said Lavalle, tenderly, but with triumph in his eyes. "Wilmerding will want a divorce. He shall have it, and then you'll wear the wedding-ring of the man who loves you and whom you love—the only ring in the world that should never be broken."

"Don, promise me that you will never leave me alone," she pleaded, falteringly. "I don't want a chance to think, to reflect, to regret. I only want to be with you—and forget everything else in the world. Promise me."

"Love like mine knows no such word as separation," he answered. "From this hour we will never be apart. Don't fear regrets, Marian. There will be none."

"My boy," she suggested, "he will go with us. Poor little Martin! I wouldn't leave him behind fatherless and motherless."

"Of course, not," he agreed. "And now you must get a few necessaries together quickly—just the things you will require on the steamer. You can get all you need when we reach Honolulu, but there is no time for anything now, for in the circumstances it is best that we go aboard the steamer before morning. Can you be ready in an hour?"

"In an hour!" she cried, in surprise. "Yes, I can, but—but—how can we go aboard the steamer to-night? We can't, Don. Your passage is booked, but not mine."

"My passage is booked for Don Lavalle and wife," he informed her, smilingly.

She turned away her head to hide the flush that coloured her face.

"You were so sure as that!" she murmured, with a strangely new sense of disappointment.

"Yes," Lavalle answered, "for I knew love like mine could not fail to win yours. Will you pack a single trunk while I run back to my hotel and get my own things together? I can be back in an hour or less. Will you be ready?"

"Yes, I will be ready," she promised, wearily, "I will only take a few things. I want nothing that my—husband ever gave me. I shall only take a few of my own things and the jewels in the safe that were in mother's collection. They are my own, and they're very valuable, Don. It will not be safe to risk packing them in my baggage. I'll get them now and give them to you to keep until we can leave them in the purser's safe to-morrow. Be very careful of them, Don. They couldn't be replaced for a fortune."

Blackie saw her hurry to the wall—saw the sliding door roll back; with a quickly indrawn breath he watched the woman fumble nervously with the combination-dial. The safe-door swung open, and she rapidly sorted out a half-dozen jewel-cases and reclosed the safe.

"Here they are, Don," she said, handing the gems to Lavalle. "I have taken only those that came from my own people. And now you must leave me. I must pack, and I can't call the servants in these circumstances. I must get the boy up and ready; and also"—she hesitated a second, and then added—"I must write a note to Mr. Wilmerding telling him what I have done and why."

"Don't mail it until we are at the dock," warned the man. "Where is he—at his club or out of town?"

"He's at the Del Monte Hotel, near Monterey—or was," she answered. "The letter won't reach him till to-morrow night."

"And to-morrow night we shall be far out of sight of land," Lavalle cried. "That is as it should be. I am glad I never met him, for now I need never do so."

He stuffed the jewel-cases into his overcoat.

"I'll be back in my car in an hour," he warned. "Hurry, Marian, my love. Each minute until I am with you again will be a day."

He caught up his hat and ran down the steps to the street, where his car stood at the kerbstone.

As the door closed behind him, Marian Wilmerding sank into a chair and clutched her throat to stifle choking sobs. Intuitive womanly fear of what she was to do paralyzed her. For many minutes she lay shaking convulsively as she tried to overcome the dread that chilled her heart. Then the dismal atmosphere of the masterless home began to oppress her with a sense of wretched loneliness.

She rose, and with hard, reckless eyes shining hotly from behind wet lashes, she ran upstairs to pack, as she had promised.

As Donald Lavalle threw open the door of his empty car, a man who had slipped behind him round the corner of the Wilmerding residence stepped to his side.

"I'm sorry to have to trouble you for my wife's jewels, Lavalle," he said.

The triumphant smile on Lavalle's face faded, and he shrank back in speechless consternation.

"Your wife's jewels!" he ejaculated, trying to recover from the shock of the utterly unexpected interruption. "You are——"

"Yes, I am Martin Wilmerding; and the happy chance that brought me home to-night also gave me the pleasure of listening from the window-seat of the dining-room to your interesting *tête-à-tête* with my wife."

A revolver flashed into Blackie's hand and was jabbed sharply into Lavalle's ribs.

"Give me Marian's jewels," the pseudo-husband cried. "Hand them over before I blow your heart out. That's what I ought to do—and I may, anyway."

Lavalle handed over the cases that contained the Wilmerding collection of gems.

"Now," continued his captor, "I want a word with you."

The revolver was thrust so savagely into Lavalle's face that it left a long red bruise.

"I have heard all you said to-night. I know all your plans for stealing away my wife," the inexorable voice continued, "and I've just a word of warning for you. You are dealing with a man, not a woman, from now on; and if you 'phone, write, telegraph, or ever again communicate in any way with Marian, I'll blow your worthless brains out if I have to follow you round the world to do it. Do you understand that, Mr. Don Lavalle?"

"I understand you," said Lavalle, helplessly.

Again the muzzle bruised the flesh of his cheek.

"And as a last kindly warning, Lavalle," Blackie continued, "I suggest that you take extreme precautions to see that you do not miss the *Manchuria* when she sails in the morning; because if you are not on board, you won't live to see another sunset, if I have to kill you in your own club. Will you sail or die?"

"I'll sail," said Lavalle.

"Very well. That's about all that requires words between us, I believe. Go, and remember your life is in your own hands. One word of any kind to Marian, and you forfeit it. I don't know why I don't kill you now. I would if it were not for the scandal all this would cause when it came out before the jury that would acquit me. Now go."

Lavalle pressed the button that started the motor as Blackie stepped back from his side.

"I've just one word I want to say to you, Wilmerding," Lavalle began, his foot on the clutch. "It's this: You have only yourself to blame. Don't accuse Marian. You forced her into the situation you discovered this evening, by your neglect of the finest little woman I ever met. I was forced into it by a love I admit frankly. Don't blame Marian for what you yourself have caused. I won't ever see or communicate with her again. You have my word for that."

"That's the most decent speech I've heard from your lips to-night," said the man beside the car, dropping his revolver back into an outside pocket. "I don't blame her. I've learned many important facts to-night—one of which is that the right place for a man is in his own home with his own wife. I'm going to remember that; and the wedding-ring that was dropped into the ashes to-night is going back on the finger it fits. Good night."

Lavalle, without a word, threw in the clutch, and his car sped away and was enveloped and hidden by the fog.

Halfway down the street, Blackie came to another car standing at the kerb, with a well-muffled chauffeur sitting behind the wheel. As he climbed in, the driver uttered a low, thankful cry.

"Where have you been so terribly long?" she said, reaching out to clasp his hand. "I was getting frightfully nervous about you, Blackie, particularly since those people went in. What happened? Did you get the jewels? Did you have any trouble?"

"No trouble. I have the jewels here—feel the packages; and a whole lot happened," answered Blackie, with deep satisfaction. "I've a new story to tell you when we get home, Mary. It's the story of a big burglar named Blackie, and a little boy named Martin Wilmerding, and a still littler woolly dog named Rex, and a woman who guessed wrong. I think it will interest you. Let's go. I have several things to do before we go home."

On the way he stopped at a telegraph office, and sent the following:—

"To Martin Wilmerding, Del Monte Hotel, Monterey.

"The boy needs you. I do too. Please come.

"MARIAN."

A second message:—

"Mrs. Marian Wilmerding, 3420, Broadway, San Francisco.

"The package you gave me were what I really wanted. Thank you, and good-bye.

"D. L."

"Those telegrams, and how they came to be sent, will be a mystery to the Wilmerdings to the end of time," he thought, deeply contented.

"Let's go home, Mary," he said, then, returning to his car and climbing in. "I think I've finished my night's work, and I don't think I've done such a bad job, either."

He was silent for a moment.

"I've given a wife to a husband," he said, half to himself. "I've given a father to a child; I've given a mother the right to look her son in the face without shame; and I've played square with the gamest little pal I ever want to know, Martin Wilmerding, Jnr., and his dog Rex. And for my pay I've taken the Wilmerding jewel-collection. I wonder who's the debtor!"

A Shock for Uncle Timothy

By Keble Howard

Illustrated by A. Gilbert, R.I.

I.

A GROUP of young officers stood in the broad passage outside Room 39. They laughed, and chatted, and bantered; yet they were not really quite at their ease. For, when you get a summons to Room 39, it means that you are reporting for duty after leave, and a few minutes in that room decides your fate for the next act in your particular little war comedy-drama.

Now and again the door would open, an officer emerge, and another officer enter. The entering officer would close the door, quietly and carefully, bring his heels smartly together, and salute. The emerging officer would grin at his pals, rap out "France," or "Egypt," or "Mesopotamia," or "Italy," or some home station, in a guarded undertone, shake hands, and disappear rapidly down the stairs to make the most of the few hours remaining to him.

"Who's next?" asked somebody.

"Me, I think."

"Yes, that's right, Mossy. You're next, and I'm after you."

"Mossy" straightened his tunic, twitched at his tie, smoothed his half-inch of moustache, corrected the angle of his cap to the thousandth of an inch, and went in. There was about five-feet-eleven of him, in case anyone cares to know, and his eyes were blue, his skin pink, and all that sort of thing. He had rather more than his share of ribbons and *chevrons*. Despite the fact that a girl of two-and-twenty had turned her back on him the day before, and walked rapidly into a Tube station, the Authorities would not have sold him to the enemy for three Huns of similar build, age, and position. Now you should know Mossy.

"Name?" said the officer at the desk.

"Captain Cutforth, sir."

"Captain Maurice Cutforth, D.S.O.?"

"Yes, sir."

"You reporting for duty after sick-leave?"

"Yes, sir."

"Quite fit again, Cutforth?"

"Yes, thank you, sir."

"Righto. You've got to bung off to Egypt. Got your kit?"

"Most of it, sir."

"Can you get off to-morrow? I know it's short notice, but we want you there as soon as possible."

"Very good, sir."

"That's topping. Here are your instructions. You know what to do. Good-bye, Cutforth, and good luck."

"Good-bye, sir."

Mossy went down the stairs thinking hard.

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He had rather less than twenty-four hours in London. He wanted a new tunic, and some breeches, and some boots, and some shirts, and some collars, and cigarettes for the journey. His tailor lived in Sackville Street. Mossy hailed a taxi, and told the man to drive to his uncle's office in the City.

He did not enjoy the drive. That wee moustache of his got fearful gyp. Not that he was afraid—at any rate, not so much as all that—of his uncle. Timothy Cutforth was a pretty terrifying person, but ancient civilians in mufti lose their terrors after a time, especially when you are off to Egypt for six months at least. No. Captain Cutforth, D.S.O., was infinitely more frightened of the girl of twenty-two who had turned her back on him.

He was almost certain to see her, for she was his uncle's confidential secretary. Mossy trembled as he thought of the look she would give him out of those amazing eyes. Perhaps, though, she would not look at him at all. Perhaps she would utterly ignore him. Anyway, if the worst came to the worst, he would *see* her! He would see her as she came exquisitely into the room, and he would hear her as she spoke, in that low husky voice of hers, to his unworthy old uncle. And he would revel in the sight of her wonderful hair. He trembled again as he thought of that coil of pure gold.

You will gather that Mossy had stopped a very dangerous one.

II.

"Mr. Cutforth in?"

"Yes, sir. Did you wish to see him?"

He wanted to say, "No. I wish to see Miss Devenish. Ask her if she'll come and have lunch with me. I'm going to Egypt to-morrow. Tell her it's our last chance, and I adore her beyond the dreams of adoration!"

Instead of which he said, "Yes, please, if he's not engaged."

He went up in the lift, and was shown straight into his uncle's office. Uncle Timothy, for all his years, was a very up-to-date and enterprising trader. He kept, not only abreast, but ahead of the times. He liked to be talked about as a very alert person. That, for instance, was why he confided his letters to a dictaphone, instead of ringing the bell for Miss Devenish and pouring the story direct into her enchanting ears.

Which proves that Uncle Timothy, the unnatural rascal, was not in love with Miss Devenish.

"Well, Maurice, my boy, have you come to take me out to lunch?"

"Yes, uncle, if you like."

"That doesn't sound very cordial. Never mind. I'll take you out instead. I've just cleared off all my correspondence, thanks to this splendid contrivance. People don't realize the advantages of a dictaphone, or you'd find them in every office in London. Makes you independent of your typist. She may be busy, or away ill, or gone home, but that doesn't stop you. You just take off the receiver, press the switch, say what you have to say, and there you are! Your typist removes the cylinder, puts it on her own machine, sets it going, and out comes the correspondence. Then, too, you have a perfect record! No disputes! No telling me I said so-and-so! The good old dictaphone *can't* lie!"

"It's certainly a wonderful thing. By the way, Uncle Timothy, I'm off to Egypt to-morrow."

"Egypt, eh? Lucky dog! I wish I was! You can think of me in this stuffy office, doing the work of ten men with no assistance to speak of! Egypt, eh? We must have a bottle on that! I'll just wash my hands, and then I'm with you. Here's the paper."

Alone. Alone, and she was just the other side of that door! Would she come in? Should he ring the bell that summoned her? No, idiot! That would never do! She would never forgive that!

Mossy coughed. No answer. The communicating door refused to open. One precious minute had gone.

His eyes strayed to the dictaphone. If only *he* had a dictaphone which she was compelled to listen to! What fervent messages he would breathe on to that smooth substance! What a glorious idea! One could sit in a room all by oneself, with no bewildering beauty to tie your tongue in knots, and just let it go! Let it go for all you were worth! And then, when she turned it on, out would come all the things that you had meant to say and never could say because——

By Jove! Why not? Dare he? Had he time? Suppose Uncle Timothy came in and found him muddling up all the precious correspondence? Suppose he got off the mark a bit, and talked all through Uncle Timothy's talk?

Time was going. Tick-tick. Tick-tick. In less than twenty-four hours he would be on his way to Egypt. Too late! She would be married to some swanky fellow with red tabs by the time he got back! Maddening thought!

Mossy approached the dictaphone on tiptoe. He knew exactly how to work it. He had watched his uncle a score of times.

He touched the switch. The thing began to revolve. He took up the receiver. Now or never! *Courage, mon brave!* Faint heart never won fair lady! . . .

It was done. The words had been spoken that might make or mar him with Felice. (Felice Devenish! Adorable name!) They might also mar him with Uncle Timothy, his financial anchor in the stormy and expensive sea of life. Anyway, make or mar, they had been spoken.

He stopped the cylinder and replaced the receiver. Only just in time! Mossy had not gained the hearthrug more than a second when Uncle Timothy returned, reeking of scented soap.

"Now, Maurice, my boy, I'm ready for you! Feel peckish? Got a coupon? No? Never mind! Oysters are just in again, and a nice savoury omelette and a bottle of the Widow will keep you going, eh? Egypt, eh? Well, I never! What a war!"

Over the bottle of the Widow Uncle Timothy opened his heart. He confided to Mossy that the Government had offered him a post of considerable importance.

"Mind you, Maurice, I didn't jump at it. Oh, dear, no! My reply is very dignified—very dignified indeed. They want *me* and I can do without *them*—that's the situation, and that is what I conveyed, delicately, on the dictaphone."

"On the—the dictaphone, uncle?"

"Yes, my lad. I'd just finished it when you came in. Wonderful instrument! Here we sit, taking a bite of lunch, and I'm actually at my office talking to my typist! Can you beat that? No, of course you can't! Fill up your glass, my lad, and I'll wish you *bon voyage!*"

Uncle Timothy, undoubtedly, was in splendid form. The offer from the Government had put him on grand terms with himself. He saw, in the rosy distance, a knighthood! Perhaps, if he came out of it very well, a baronetcy! "Sir Timothy Cutforth, Bart." Good! A fine, rich, rolling sound about that! Look well on the letters! Look well on his cards! Ha! Ha!

Mossy, in the meantime, was not nearly so happy. If his uncle had been talking the letter to the Government just before he came, his own message to Miss Devenish—to Felice, bless her!—would follow immediately after it. Suppose she—— ! Suppose somebody else—— ! Oh, but that was too awful to contemplate!

"I suppose you see your letters, Uncle Timothy, before they go off?"

"See 'em? Bless the lad, of course I see 'em! I have to sign 'em, don't I? Much you know about business!"

"I wasn't sure whether you signed them all. I thought, possibly, you left some for other people to sign."

"Oh, well, unimportant letters—yes. But all the important ones I sign myself. You must come back with me to the office, and I'll show you that note to the Right Honourable Edward Batchelar. I'm proud of that composition, though I say it myself. And now, my boy, what about funds? Egypt is rather an expensive place, I've always understood. How do you stand at Cox's?"

"Don't you bother about that, Uncle Timothy. I can manage for the present."

"Don't you be a young duffer! You take a cheque when you can get it. Money isn't so easy come by that you can turn up your nose at it. I'm proud of you, my boy, though I don't often tell you so, and I like you to cut a dash, and look well, and have all the right things. There'll be a cheque for a hundred for you to put in your pocket when you leave the office."

"You're too good, Uncle Timothy."

And he meant it. If Uncle Timothy discovered that his nephew had been making love to his private secretary, and using his beloved dictaphone to further his suit, he might be inclined to agree that he *was* too good.

Ignorance being bliss, he linked his arm in that of his nephew, and they strolled back to the office as amicably as you can imagine.

III.

THE neatly-typed letters were lying in a heap on Uncle Timothy's desk. He glanced at them with pleasant anticipation, bade Mossy be seated, and took up his pen.

Mossy's heart quaked. Felice, to be sure, was far too clever to mistake his voice for his uncle's, even on the dictaphone. Nor, however angry she might be with him—and why she was angry with him Heaven alone knew! would she go so far as to ruin his chances out of spite.

All was well. Yes, all was well. But he wished the ordeal over.

"Ah!" cried Uncle Timothy, at last. "Here it is! Now I'll read it to you! Much hinges on this letter, my boy—far more than you imagine."

"To the Right Honourable Edward Batchelar,
P.C., Ministry of Inland Supplies.

"SIR,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the third inst., wherein you do me the signal honour of asking me to take up the position of Director-General of the Rope and Yarn Supply.

"Whilst I am deeply sensible of the compliment you are good enough to pay me, and, as a patriotic citizen, naturally anxious to do whatever lies in my power to help my country at this juncture, I must beg leave to point out that the business I control is a vast one, and that I am working with a greatly reduced staff.

"At the same time, if my duties would be such that I could honourably discharge them to your satisfaction, whilst also fulfilling my obligations to my fellow-directors and the shareholders of this company, you may rest assured that I am ready to place such technical knowledge as I possess at your fullest disposal.

"I have the honour to remain, Sir,

"Yours obediently,

"P.S." Here Uncle Timothy removed and polished his spectacles.

"'P.S.'? I never wrote any P.S. that I can remember.

"P.S.—Will you meet me at 'The Genoa' at seven this evening? It's frightfully urgent. Haven't a moment to explain, but do, *do*, DO!"

Uncle Timothy, purple in the face, again removed his glasses and glared helplessly at Maurice. Then, with a groan of inarticulate rage, he put his finger on the bell and kept it there.

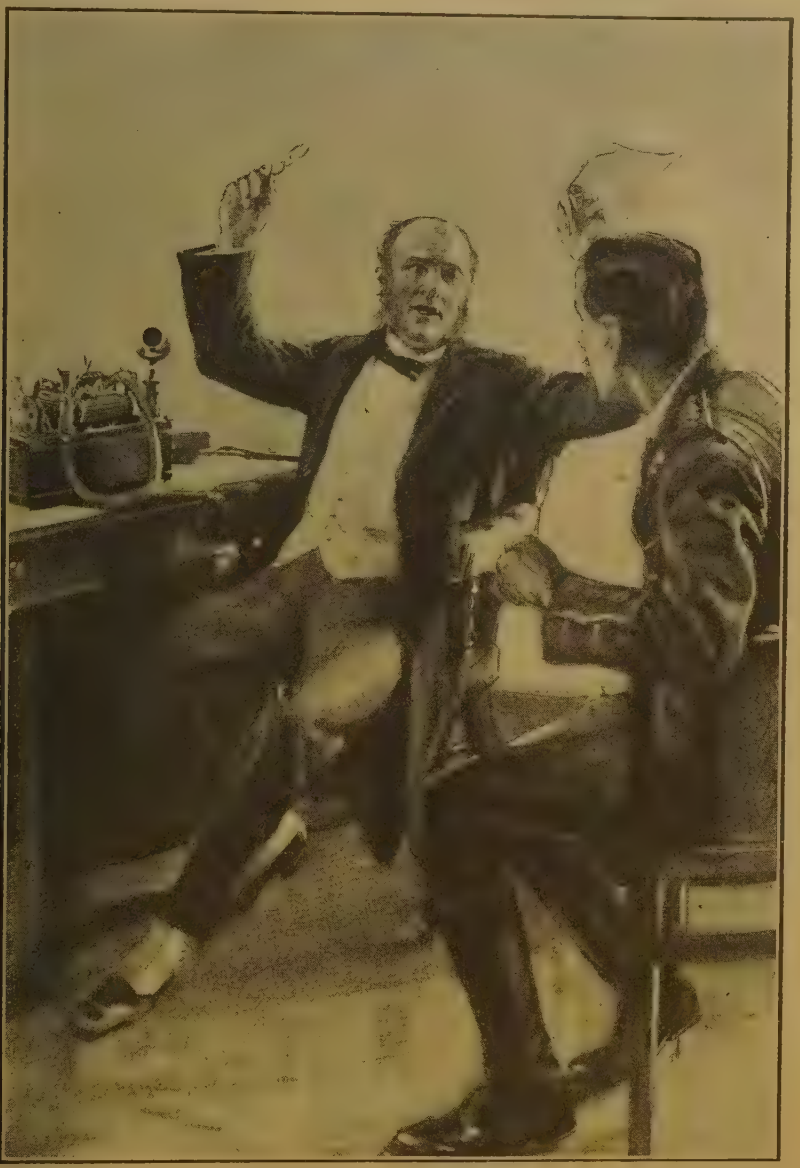
The communicating door flew open, but it was not Miss Devenish who appeared. The secretary who answered the bell was a Miss Eliot—a little insignificant thing whom Mossy had sometimes seen as one sees a chair, or a pen, or a patient clock.

"I don't want *you!*" roared Uncle Timothy. "I want Miss Devenish! Send her in at once!"

Mossy opened his mouth to intervene, but all that came forth was a sort of gurgle.

"What, sir?" bellowed Uncle Timothy. "You keep quiet! Don't you dare to interfere! This has nothing to do with you! I've

been insulted in my own office! Somebody has been playing a practical joke on me! I'll practical joke 'em! I'll show 'em who I am Don't stand staring there, Miss Eliot, or whatever your confounded name is! Send Miss Devenish to me at once! *At once!*"



"UNCLE TIMOTHY REMOVED HIS GLASSES AND STARED HELPLESSLY AT MAURICE."

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Cutforth, but Miss Devenish is not here to-day."

"Not here? Why isn't she here?"

"She phoned through to say she had a very bad headache. I should have told you earlier, but I could hear you were very busy with the dictaphone."

"Busy be hanged! You ought to have told me immediately! I will not have things going on in my office that I know nothing whatever about! Who typed these letters?"

"I did, Mr. Cutforth."

"Oh, you did, did you? And did you type this one to the Right Honourable Edward Batchelar?"

"Yes, Mr. Cutforth."

"Oh! You did, did you? And who told you to add that postscript about meeting me at some filthy low-down restaurant? Where did you get that from, eh?"

"It was on the dictaphone, Mr. Cutforth."

"On the dictaphone? And I say it was not

"I'M SO DREADFULLY SORRY, MR. CUTFORTH, BUT JUST AS I'D REMOVED THE CYLINDER FROM THE MACHINE IT SLIPPED OUT OF MY HAND."

on the dictaphone! I ought to know, I suppose, what I said on the dictaphone?"

"Certainly, Mr. Cutforth."

"Very well, then! Did anyone come into this room besides yourself after we went out to lunch?"

"No, Mr. Cutforth."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure."

"And yet you have the face to stand there and tell me that I said something that I know I did not say, and could never by any possibility have said? Didn't it occur to you that I must be crazy to talk a lot of rot like that to a Cabinet Minister?"

"Well, Mr. Cutforth, I certainly thought it queer, but I didn't like to leave it out. You sometimes put——" Miss Eliot hesitated.

"Sometimes put what? Speak out!"

"Well, rather unexpected things in your letters."

"Oh, I do, do I? At any rate, I never yet said anything in a letter as unexpected as that! Fetch me the cylinder!"

Miss Eliot, as she turned to leave the room, gave a glance—just the merest glance—at Mossy, who had taken up a strategic position just behind his uncle's chair. Mossy was no actor, but he contrived to throw into that hundredth part of a second all the agony and all the entreaty which he was feeling.

"Now!" cried Uncle Timothy, working his shaggy eyebrows up and down with astonishing rapidity, and rubbing his hands together in savage anticipation of detecting a culprit red-tongued, so to speak. "Now! Now we'll see who has had the impertinence—the folly—to meddle with my private correspondence! Such a thing has never happened before all the years I've been in business! The rascal shall be made to smart for it, I can tell you! I'll give him such a——! Halloa! What's that?"

From the next room there had come, at that instant, a slight crash, followed by a feminine exclamation that conveyed dismay. A moment later, Miss Eliot entered with the cylinder—in fifty fragments.

"What the deuce is that?" roared Uncle Timothy.

"I'm so dreadfully sorry, Mr. Cutforth, but just as I'd removed the cylinder from the machine it slipped out of my hand and——"

"Slipped out of your hand? D'you mean to tell me you've smashed it?"

"I'm very, very sorry!"

The old man ground his teeth. He did not speak. Anger had deprived him of speech. With a feeble wave of the hand he dismissed the luckless under-secretary.

It took him a long time to calm down, but he eventually recovered himself sufficiently to write the cheque for a hundred. Mossy, with a deep sigh of relief, slipped it into his letter-case, and bade his uncle a dutiful and almost touching farewell.

IV.

Whilst Mossy was waiting for the lift, Miss Eliot came out of her room. This was just the chance for which he had been longing. Seizing her by both hands, he thanked her again and again.

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Miss Eliot, looking away and recovering her hands as quickly as possible.

"But it does! You were a regular little brick, and I sha'n't forget it in a hurry!"

"I didn't do it on purpose, you know."

"What? Smash the thing?"

"Oh, yes, that. It was the only way out. But I really did mistake your voice. You don't speak much alike in the ordinary way, but on the dictaphone——"

"Yes, I quite see. I say, is Miss Devenish really ill?"

"How should I know?"

"Didn't she tell you over the 'phone what was the matter?"

"She said she had a splitting headache."

"Nothing else?"

"No. But I thought *her* voice sounded a little—a little unusual."

"What sort of unusual?"

"Perhaps you know better than I do."

"Perhaps I do. We both got a bit ratty, and I know I said one or two things I didn't in the least mean. And the rotten part of it is I'm off to Egypt to-morrow."

"To-morrow?" Miss Eliot shot a quick look at him. Then she peered down the shaft of the lift to conceal a rather white little face.

"Yes. I wish I could have made it up with her before I go."

"Well, why—why don't you?"

"How can I? She's not here."

Miss Eliot laughed—a curious, dry laugh. "Wait a moment," she said, and disappeared into her room. Presently she returned with a slip of paper, which she gave to Mossy.

Mossy read it. "Is this her address?"

Miss Eliot nodded.

"By Jove, you are a stunner! Shall I 'phone through and ask if I can call to say good-bye?"

"Yes, I think I should—if you want to get ticked off."

"Wrong again! What asses men are! I'll get a taxi and buzz down there in twenty minutes!"

"And I must re-type that letter, or *I* shall get ticked off."

"Good-bye, Miss Eliot. I shall always think of you as my good angel."

Up came the lift at last. He stepped into it, saluted, and sank from sight. As for Miss Eliot, she went back into her office, and bent patiently over the typewriter.

"This a fresh copy of the letter?" growled Uncle Timothy.

"Yes, Mr. Cutforth."

"H'm! Seems all right this time. What's that smudge?"

"Smudge? Oh, I'm sorry, I——"

"Never mind. Get the letter off."

Miss Eliot waited half an hour, and then, rather tremblingly, she rang up Miss Devenish.

"She's gorn out with an officer," replied a strange voice.

"Thank you," said Miss Eliot. "That's all I wanted to know."

" BRIL, WARNED IN TIME, CLAMBERED TO THE ROOF, WITH TWO

THE AVENGING

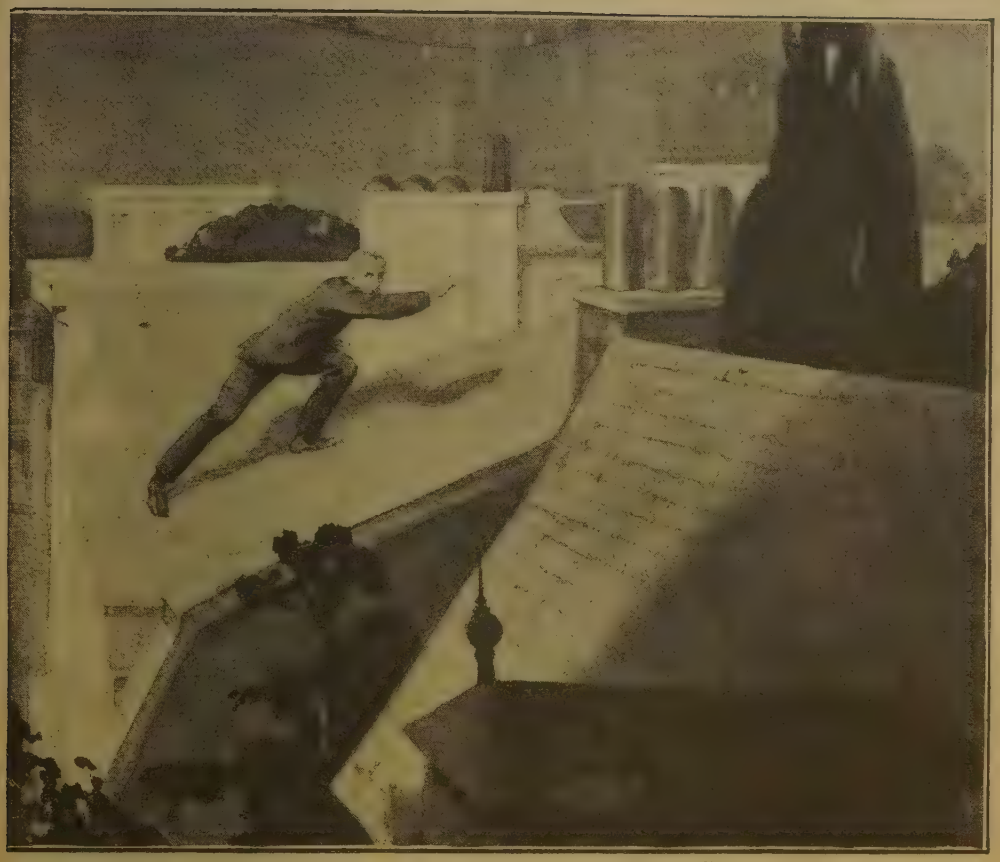
By T. TOPPING,

Former Private Secretary to the Hon. Brand Whitlock, American Minister to Belgium.

Here is a wonder-story of war, told for the first time. Edith Cavell, an English nurse in Brussels, was murdered by the Germans for helping French and Belgian soldiers to cross the frontier. Did you know she was betrayed by a renegade Belgian? After the tragedy of her brutal conviction and her heroic death there followed another remarkable drama. The narrative of these thrilling events is here told by the secretary of Mr. Brand Whitlock, the American Minister to Belgium. It is a story of retribution, carried out with extraordinary persistence and courage.

THE arrest of Miss Cavell on the 5th of August, 1915, created little stir in Brussels. Except in the immediate entourage of her nursing home and in American Legation circles it passed practically unperceived. The Germans, in their usual clandestine way, had arrested her " without leaving any trace." Like many other unhappy souls who fell into their clutches, she just disappeared from the dismal routine of Belgian existence during the occupation. The flinging of the tender and unobtrusive little woman into the miasmal pool of German treachery known as the Kommandantur caused hardly a ripple on the surface of Brussels life.

But one morning Brussels, which had seen at close range the abomination of Louvain, Tamines, and Aerschot, which had witnessed desecrations that the German mind alone can conceive and the German will can execute—Brussels, *blasé* with atrocities and cruelties — Brussels awoke to find itself face to face with a new horror.



PLAIN-CLOTHES MEN IN HOT PURSUIT AND BLAZING AWAY AT HIM."

OF EDITH CAVELL

It was October 12th, 1915. About 3.30 that morning, gentle little Miss Cavell had been led out into the yard of St. Gilles Prison and wantonly shot down. And blood-red *affiches*, posted all over the walls of the city, shrieked the news of the abhorrent deed to a dismayed population.

A wave of indignation and a shudder of horror passed over Brussels; then gradually other engrossing events absorbed the conversation. Brussels resumed its normal, or rather its abnormal, appearance, and brave, kind little Miss Cavell, sleeping in that bleak prison yard at St. Gilles, became a memory, a thing of the past.

But as time went on, in the *cafés* and *brasseries* where the great majority of the population was wont to congregate, amid the maledictions that the Belgians showered on their oppressors, when the murder of the stout-hearted frail English nurse was mentioned, one heard sinister rumours of treachery and betrayal. It soon became an open secret that Miss Cavell had been apprehended and convicted through the denunciation of one whom she had befriended. His name was freely mentioned among the coterie of well-informed Belgians who assembled at various meeting-places in the commune of Ixelles.

It was my custom to frequent the Porte de Namur, and, while officially neutral, my sentiments were sufficiently well known to the natives to give me access to the most intimate conferences of men who had sworn never to bend under the German yoke. Thus, soon after the execution of Miss Cavell, I was aware of the name of the man who had

NURSE CAVELL.
Photo. Underwood.

delivered her into the hands of the bloodthirsty Huns.

He was called van der ——. No, I shall not mention his name. First, because he belonged to a race that electrified the world by its courage and abnegation during that dark month of August, 1914. His father is, or perhaps by this time was, a respectable citizen of Brussels, an ex-officer in the army, who promptly disowned his son when the crime had been proved.

He was a young man of military age and bad habits, and the emoluments received for his work in one of the departments of public service of the city were inadequate to gratify his expensive tastes and satiate his craving for pleasure. And so, when a tentacle of that octopus known as the German espionage system reached out and encircled him, it found an unresisting victim.

The Germans had become aware of a leak across the frontier through which filtered many young men capable of bearing arms against them and anxious to do so. Van der ——, affecting profound patriotism and professing deep hatred for the violators of his country, went to Miss Cavell and requested to be helped into Holland. He was introduced to Baucq (the man who was shot at the same time as Miss Cavell), and all arrangements were made for his passage into the Netherlands. On the eve of his departure, when he had penetrated the secrets of the organization, van der —— repaired to the Kommandantur, and the next day Miss Cavell, Baucq, and Severin were arrested. Incidentally, that same day van der —— was buying wine for two women in a *café* near the Place de Brouckere.

LOUIS BRIL, THE AVENGER.

But while the wave of horror and loathing that swept the civilized world at the news of the murder of Miss Cavell spent itself in screeching headlines and helplessly bitter comment, in the heart of Louis Bril it assumed a more concrete form.

Louis was a mild, inoffensive-looking little chap, a beardless youth of twenty-five or less, with pale blue eyes and a shock of yellow hair. But the thin lips that formed a small strong mouth were hard and determined. He walked with a slight stoop of the shoulders, the result of long hours spent over the chess-board, a game at which he was an expert. Before the war he had been living in Paris, but the outbreak of hostilities had caught him at Brussels, where he was visiting his aged parents and other relatives. He offered his services as a volunteer, but they were not accepted, and he remained behind and, with ill-suppressed feelings of rage, saw the Germans enter the capital. Later on he managed to slip across into France, whence he returned on some mission, the exact character of which I have never been able to ascertain, but which I am sure did not purport to further the designs of the German army.

BRIL'S ENDLESS VIGIL.

I have some of the details that follow from an intimate friend of his, a young schoolmaster of Brussels whom I knew well, while the others came under my personal observation.

An *arrête* of Governor-General von Bissing, re-edited and republished from time to time, decreed that any man found in the possession of firearms would be punished with death.

However, one night while engaged in a game of chess with his friend the schoolmaster, in the little room that he occupied on the top floor of an old building in Ixelles, where he kept out of sight of the Germans, Bril suddenly whipped out two automatic revolvers from his pockets—"Browneengs," he called them—and said to his startled opponent:—

"One of the pills (*pruneaux*) in this Browneeng is for the man who betrayed Miss Cavell, and I shall never rest until I get him."

Days, weeks passed, and the betrayer of the heroic English nurse continued to walk the streets of Brussels with apparent impunity.

But the long, patient shadow of van der —— went on. It could be done only at night, as Bril did not dare to leave his room during the day. And van der ——, whether through premonition of impending evil or from temperament, kept to the bright streets and the illuminated *cafés*.

And the endless vigil of Bril continued. Promptly at the stroke of six, as van der —— would emerge from the office on the Rue de Trône, where he performed his respectable duties, Bril, crouching in the shadow on the other side of the street, would fall into step and would not allow his quarry to get out of his sight, as the latter went about his di reputable work.

Generally the trail led to the Kommandantur through the Rue de Trône, the brightly illuminated Boulevard, to the still brighter Rue de la Loi. Bril would take up his post on the corner, across from the Kommandantur, and when van der —— had completed his report to his employers, the self-appointed avenger could see him come out, generally accompanied by plain-clothes men of the German secret service. Thence he followed to some restaurant, where the party settled down to dinner, and Bril knew that his work was done for the night, as there was little chance of the bodyguards leaving their *protégé*.

On other evenings the traitor went into town at once, car No. 15 or No. 14 being boarded at the Boulevard after a walk of a few hundred yards from his office. But van der —— never wandered from the crowded thoroughfares and never left the gleam of the electric lights.

Bril, like Nemesis on his trail, followed.

About eleven one evening two *polizeis*, patrolling their beat, came lumbering up a lonely street leading to the Chausse de Haecht in Schaerbeck, a suburb of Brussels. It was a cold, rainy, dark night, and the *polizeis* did not notice an obstruction on the sidewalk until one of them stumbled upon it. With an impatient oath he stopped and picked up the body of a man. It was still warm and blood was trickling from a wound above the left temple, while the clothing on the left side of the body was saturated with blood that had not yet had time to coagulate. One bullet had gone through the heart and

"WITH AN IMPATIENT OATH HE STOPPED AND PICKED UP THE BODY OF A MAN."

another had traversed the brain. It was the body of van der ——. When searched at the police-station, besides a goodly sum of money in German bills of large denomination, there was found, among other papers, a little perfumed note written in a feminine hand and which read:—

"*Je t'attends ce soir chez P. près du Parc Josaphat.*" ["I will meet you this evening at P.'s near Jehoshaphat Park."]

There is no doubt that more than one hundred persons in Brussels, among them at least ten members of the Belgian police force, knew who had committed this murder, or rather who had executed this sentence. But weeks went on and no arrest was made. And so no surprise was felt when one day a notice was posted that "owing to the apathy displayed by the Belgian police" the case had been taken out of their hands and would be handled by the German military police.

ONE THOUSAND MARKS REWARD.

The *affiche* ended with the only two arguments the Germans know: bribery and terrorism. A reward of one thousand marks was offered to anyone denouncing the murderer and a threat of death was held over the head of whosoever should harbour him.

Hunted like a wild beast, Bril for more than a month managed to elude the vigilance of his pursuers by remaining indoors during the day and coming out for a few minutes at night.

One afternoon the Germans, acting apparently under precise instructions and with full knowledge as to his whereabouts, entirely surrounded the block in which the room occupied by Bril was to be found. One shudders to think that perhaps the reward of one thousand marks may not have been totally foreign to the source of their information.

Bril, warned in time, clambered to the roof, with two plain-clothes men in hot pursuit and blazing away at him. After a run of a few hundred feet over roofs, he reached the edge of one overlooking a lane about twelve feet wide, and without hesitating the fugitive leaped across it, landed safely on another house a storey lower, and eluded his pursuers, who looked about, hesitated, consulted one another, and could not muster up sufficient courage to take the plunge. Bril made his way to the street and was gone.

He took refuge at Vilvorde (a town about ten

kilometres from Brussels) and had nearly completed arrangements for a dash across the death-dealing wires into Holland—was to have left on the following day, in fact—when he returned to Brussels to thank the man who had made it possible for him to escape, fell into a trap, and was arrested. He disappeared behind the sombre walls of the Kommandantur, *au grand secret*. And for two months nothing was heard of Louis Bril.

LOUIS BRIL SENTENCED TO DEATH.

One morning a heavy, plodding German soldier bearing a flimsy scrap of paper entered the little *café* owned and operated by Etienne D., at the corner of the Rue de Trône and the Place de Londres. Mrs. D. was Bril's sister. The soldier handed D. the paper. It was a brief statement to the effect that Louis Bril had been sentenced to death (*peine de mort*) and would be shot the next morning.

While no one, even his lawyer, is permitted to visit one accused before a German Military Tribunal during the investigation and trial (?), by a surprising generosity in the Teutonic character his relatives are allowed to call on him at the prison after sentence has been pronounced. Inasmuch as the judgment and execution are seldom more than twenty-four hours apart, it means that a last visit may be had with a loved one who is already in the shadow of death.

I was returning from the Théâtre Molière that evening and quite by chance entered Etienne's *café*.

Etienne's wife was seated on a little stool behind the bar, weeping convulsively, and her husband's face was pale and set, and every now and then tears would well up into his eyes, but he would brush them off, shake his head, and continue to talk to the little group of the faithful who were gathered about his bar condoling with him. Two little cherubs, one aged five and the other three, scenting that something was wrong, had refused to be put to bed, and, leaning over their mother's knees, looked up into her red, swollen eyes, blissfully oblivious of what it was all about, but with a puzzled expression on their little faces.

The atmosphere was permeated with gloom and charged with despair and impotent rage.

Etienne and his wife, in the company of Bril's father, had just returned from their last visit to poor Louis at the prison of St. Gilles. He had been very brave, had tried to console them and to cheer them up. He was content to die, felt that he was giving up his life for a good cause—the suppression of van der —— having been but an incident in the task that he had set himself to perform with the limited means at his command. He expressed a regret, not for life itself, but because he had to go while the Boches were still in Brussels and he would be unable to render further services to his country. While his sister was weeping in her father's arms, he had called Etienne aside and had begged him to go out and procure some poison for him, as he would like to cheat the Germans of the satisfaction of standing him against the wall. Of course, poor Etienne could do nothing of the sort. The hour allotted for the visit being at an end, a young sentry told them not unkindly and with a voice quivering with emotion that they must leave. For a moment Louis was on the verge of breaking down, but he promptly rallied, and when his relatives left he was very cool and collected and brave.

In the early hours of the damp, drizzling morning, two figures muffled in great-coats and furs might have been seen huddling close to the fence near the main entrance to the Tir National. It was Etienne and his wife.

Just as dawn was breaking in the weeping sky, the savage howl of a siren horn was heard in the distance, and presently three huge military automobiles drew up to the gate.

A few sharp, guttural commands; a squad of soldiers stepped out, some officers, then a priest and a pale little man walking with a firm step and head erect between two giant guards, closed the ghostly procession. They disappeared promptly inside the grounds. One of the officers could be heard roaring a few final orders, and then silence. A pause, tense, interminable . . . A volley, the crash of twelve rifles, a final pistol-shot, and what had been Louis Bril lay on the wet grass, close to that earth that was soon to swallow him for ever.

Bril's father died of a broken heart a few weeks later, after having been refused permission to give the body of his son a Christian burial.

And a month after the execution, the family, having given up all hope of obtaining the body of young Bril, decided to have a solemn requiem mass sung in one of the churches, and drew up circulars to inform their friends and relatives. "*Lettres de faire part*," they are called, large folders with wide black mourning margins, giving a brief history of the short span of life of the departed one and ending with an invitation to attend the funeral service of one who had died for his country ("*mort pour la patrie*").

The German censor, to whom all proofs of printed matter must be submitted before it is circulated, glanced over the paper just once and, with a grunt, ran a colossal, brutal German blue pencil through the words "*mort pour la patrie*."

But perhaps some day, when Belgium is restored to her valiant King, when the cruel vandals that now desecrate its noble soil have been flung across the Rhine, the body of brave little Louis Bril will be laid to rest in that beautiful cemetery at Ixelles where his father awaits the final call. And over his tomb a modest marble monument will bear the inscription :—

"*MORT POUR LA PATRIE.*"

THE GIRL WHO WOULD.

By MAY EDGINTON.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

PEMBER did not like the look of the future. It had a sort of twin-cylinder-two-seater look, and there was a nasty tinkling in his ears like wedding-bells.

But he had been engaged to Daisie—and her mother, who was a limpet-like old lady—for four long years, and there seemed no help for it, unless——

"Unless some better, richer feller'n me," said Pember to himself, as he looked out into the pleasance of Dover Street while he cracked his breakfast egg, "chipped in and stole her from me."

Suddenly Pember thought of George.

"John," said Pember to his man, "ring up the Temple."

John knew without telling whose chambers were wanted, and soon Pember was speaking to George.

"George," he said, "it's years since I've seen you, old man. Could you lunch to-day? You, me, and a topping girl and her mother. Say where and what time. You're a busy man, I know."

Pember knew George wasn't a busy man; he was only busier than Pember. And in a short while he had persuaded him to join his party at the Savoy at one-thirty.

"John," said Pember, "ring up Miss Bledlow."

When John had done this, Pember spoke to Daisie.

"Darling," he said, "bring your mother along to lunch at the Savoy at one-thirty. *Such* a nice chap is coming. My oldest friend. Rich, young, no end of good connections. Barrister. Try to like him for my sake. I want you to see a good deal of him when you're married."

Pember had always been greatly tickled by his own keen gift of humour, so here he was obliged to stop and cough so that he should not laugh.

Then he continued. "He's such a brilliant fellow! Just been briefed for a big case. He'll be Attorney-General before he's done. Well, you'll come? Bye-bye, dearie."

Pember rang off and wiped his brow.

"John," he said, "call up Josephs."

While John was doing this—and it took some little time to get to the private ear of Josephs, the moneylender, in Victoria Street—Pember's young cousin, the sixth Marquess of Caucassie, let himself in with the latchkey which Pember had given him.

"I'll wait while you dress," said Caucassie. "I've nothing to do."

Pember liked the admiration which he always felt was bestowed upon him by Caucassie. He used to give him a great deal of advice, to which the pink youth listened with attention, for Pember was forty and wicked. This morning as he chose his tie Pember was in his happiest vein.

"I've been thinking," he began, "if I hadn't been destined for the—ah—well, if I hadn't been destined not to do anything, I believe I should have been rather a nut in the literary direction. In fact, I'm going to write a book about all the people I know—sort of reflections—and the people I know will pay me not to publish it. That's where the money lies. But I must tell you what I was thinking. It was that however bad a hole you're in you can always get out of it if you can persuade some less able chap to let you climb over him."

"Then you leave the other chap in the hole," said Caucassie.

"That," said Pember, "is his affair."

Pember was in an awfully good humour; and when they went down into Dover Street, seeing his tailor coming, he took Caucassie's arm, and looked so blithe and gay that the tailor, who had been coming to call politely before resorting to other measures, turned round and went home again.

Pember left Caucassie in Piccadilly and took a taxi to Victoria Street. John had apprised

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Mr. Josephs of his coming, and Mr. Josephs was ready for Pember. But he was not ready enough, for he parted with fifty pounds on grounds which seemed to him afterwards perhaps a little insufficient. However, the chief point was that Pember should have cash enough to do his party well at lunch.

Daisie, with her mother well in hand, arrived only half an hour late, and Pember saw with pleasure that she had surpassed herself. Her little face looked even littler, her big eyes bigger, her pouting mouth pouted more, and yesterday's henna shampoo had left her hair simply gorgeous. And to anyone who had not heard her giggle continuously for four years, that giggle was a thing of joy—young, fresh, and true.

This is what George thought of the giggle directly he heard it. It was what Pember had thought long ago.

"DAISIE, WITH HER MOTHER WELL IN HAND, ARRIVED ONLY HALF AN HOUR LATE."

Daisie did not tell George she was engaged to Pember. Pember had known she wouldn't, after what he had said over the wire. She had, in fact, left her ring accidentally on the dressing-table at home. Pember had thought she might. And as Pember had an engagement, he said, at four, it was George who, in spite of being such a busy man, drove Daisie and her mother home.

Exactly a week later, during which time Pember left the Bledlows and George entirely unmolested, George came to see Pember. George was very grave over his defection as Pember's friend, but exalted over his amazing luck as Daisie's *fiancé*. It took him some time to begin the story of his treachery, but at last he managed it.

"Pember, old man," he said, "I have betrayed you."

Pember got up from his breakfast—this was the only hour when his friends were sure of finding him in; other times he was making himself at home with his rich relations—and went and leaned his elbow on his Adams mantelpiece, staring, perhaps bitterly, into the fire.

"Daisie," said George. "D-d-don't you notice I call her by her first name?"

"That's nothing," said Pember; "modern familiarities are simply deplorable, but frightfully nice."

"I have taken her from you," said George, walking about agitatedly.

Pember took the blow simply splendidly.

"You've the dearest, sweetest girl in London," said he.

"I know," said George, in ecstasy.

"Tell her not to worry about me," added Pember; "I'll get over it, I suppose."

"She's been worrying," said George. "I didn't know, of course, when I lunched with you that day, that she and you were engaged, but as soon as she guessed how it was with me—er, and she loves me, Pember—she told me. Poor little girl! How she——"

"Cried," said Pember, "and I know what she said to you. Her first thought, bless her! was: 'But how about *him*? He does adore me so!'"

"How did you know?" cried George.

Pember knew because it was what Daisie had said to him four years ago when he had stolen her from a commercial traveller in tea.

George and Pember parted firmer friends than ever that morning. Pember's sense of humour caused him that evening to invent a new dish for dinner—which he happened to be taking at home in spite of himself—and he showed John how to prepare it. It was an *entrée*, and he called it—

Scallop de veau Avril,

for the happy date was April 5th.

One morning a few weeks later John reported that George was at the telephone.

Pember guessed what it was all about before he had pulled on his dressing-gown.

"I must see you," said George.

"Well, if you must, you must," said Pember.

"I'll come to breakfast," George added.

So he did.

George had changed. His cheerfulness had gone.

"Break right into it," said Pember.

"Pember," said George, "for Gawd's sake, save me."

Pember pretended not to understand, and made George tell him.

"I can't do it," said George, after he had talked for some half-hour. "I know you were fond of her and all that——"

"Don't spare my feelings," said Pember.

So George did not. "She hasn't let me rest a moment. I've been up all night and all day. She's one of those girls who like being engaged, just like some girls like hunting and some like lacrosse. And the money I've spent! I've spent money I haven't got. And I owe Josephs more'n I care to think of now. And that laugh! I dream it! And her mother! Always egging me on to work! Wants Daisie and me to hurry up and marry, so's she can have a rest. Says her old bones——"

"She's been feeling like that ever since I first knew her," said Pember. "And so you want to break your engagement? Well—um—um——"

George looked at Pember with the faith of a child; for somehow the idea was with him—quite shapeless but still existent—that Pember before him had got out of it very comfortably.

"Of course," said Pember, draping his silk dressing-gown round him thoughtfully, as he leaned upon his Adams mantelpiece, "it's not the kind of thing I like to hear a fellow say. If I didn't know you so well—— But I do know you well, and that ends it."

"I would give anything in reason," said George, fiercely, "to break away."

Pember half closed his eyes.

"What is anything?" he asked. "Is it money?"

"Yes," said George.

Pember shivered a little. "Of course," he murmured, "you should get out of the thing quietly, like a gentleman. Breach simply isn't done."

"Lord! No!" said George.

Pember then said: "George, I could help you if I could only buy myself the leisure. But just now my own affairs take up all my time. I am planning a book."

"There's nothing in that," said George; "there's much more in helping me."

Pember waited for George to particularize.

"If I could raise twenty-five cash," added George, "would it pay you for your time and trouble, old man?"

"It would pay my out-of-pocket expenses, no doubt," said Pember," and no friend of mine would insult me, old man, by offering me more."

"Is it done, then?" said George, in incredulous ecstasy.

"I believe so," Pember replied.

George went away, looking more like his old self, and Pember sat down to think. The *débris* of a plot like a newspaper serial, to run till further orders, littered itself about his brain. "Why!" he thought, "the girl's a gold mine. With henna and things I can run her till she's fifty." Being a humorist, Pember was also very much amused by his own cleverness.

"John," he said, "ring up Miss Bledlow."

He was soon speaking to Daisie.

"Daisie," said he, "don't be alarmed, I'm not going to make love to you. I've got myself well in hand. I want you to do me a favour. It's a very little thing for all you've made me suffer—though I hope I can take my gruel like a gentleman. It's this. I've got a chap dining with me to-night at the Carlton—a very rich chap, fairly rolling, in fact, whom I want to stand well with. And I want to give him a top-hole evening. If you and your mother—I know George is booked to-night. I'm sure he wouldn't mind. He can trust me. You will——? Ring off, dear, will you?"

"Why?" replied Daisie.

"It's agony to hear your voice," said Pember, truthfully, and he hung up the receiver.

"John," he said, "I'll dress." So he dressed, and just as he went out into Dover Street the young Caucassie, pink as a cherub, drove up in his racing-car.

"Halloa, old bean!" said Caucassie.

Pember looked at his cousin from a new angle this morning. A marquess? A trump! But not yet—not yet! He decided to save up Caucassie very tenderly. "Well, Frank," he replied, kindly, "will you drive me to Victoria Street? I've got to call on Josephs."

Caucassie would always drive anybody anywhere, so he took Pember to Victoria Street.

Mr. Josephs' own desk was close to a window overlooking the traffic below, and something of a motorist himself, when he heard the soft scream of the racer as she turned her long body and drew up at his door he looked out, and saw the Marquess of Caucassie driving Pember, and they looked as thick as thieves. This created a very nice impression indeed. Then Pember alighted insouciantly, and in the hallway of the office ran into George coming out.

"You!" said George. "Bit of luck! I'd rather not keep it on me." He thrust on Pember a wad of notes. "Twenty-five!" he said. "Josephs let me have it. Look here, you're going to pull the thing off, aren't you?"

"Yes," replied Pember. "I'm seeing a man here, named Brown. Know him? No? You haven't missed much." He waved George on gaily, entered the lift, and was borne up to Mr. Josephs' office.

Pember was awfully affable to Mr. Josephs. "I've not come to borrow," he said, genially, grasping his hand, "but to ask you to come and have a bit of dinner with me at the Carlton to-night. Seven-thirty? Eight? As *you* like. We'll be a jolly little party, just four."

And at eight they were a jolly little party of four at the Carlton. Pember noted that Daisie was not wearing George's ring, and he guessed the careless girl had left it on the dressing-table at home.

Mr. Josephs looked rich. He oozed riches. And—he was a widower of extreme susceptibility—he was tremendously taken with Daisie.

After dinner, Pember being booked, he said, to go on to a dance at a relation's in Mayfair, Mr. Josephs drove the ladies home.

Pember rang up George. "May I advise you," said he, "to lose yourself in work for the next two weeks, and at the end we will see what we will see. And if nothing has happened I will give you back the change out of your twenty-five pounds."

The thing worked once more like clockwork, as Pember trusted it would do, for he had better dine with me to-night. John shall do us a special menu. Let's see. It's June 3rd."

And for dinner in Pember's rooms they had *Consommé, Scallop du veau Avril, Poulet avec sauce de juin,* and dessert and champagne brought in lavishly by George. And Pember was very mellow, and uttered some of his subtlest epigrams.

Pember took to visiting Daisie and her mother again, frequently letting Daisie have the pleasure of his silent agony of unrequited love, and keeping in close touch with Mr. Josephs, for he did not wish the new *fiancé* to lean, when the time came, on any bosom other than his. This work kept Pember in town half through August, instead of going down to some of his relations in Devonshire.

It was on August 18th that Mr. Josephs made a confidence to Pember.

"MR. JOSEPHS LOOKED RICH. HE OOZED RICHES. AND—HE WAS A WIDOWER OF EXTREME SUSCEPTIBILITY—HE WAS TREMENDOUSLY TAKEN WITH DAISIE."

immense respect for the abilities of Daisie and her mother. At the end of ten days George was sent for to the Bledlows' flat to take part in such a scene as Daisie loved. He came, and told Pember about it afterwards.

"She said she knew she had ruined me for life, and that my prospects were irretrievably lost."

"And she cried?"

"And said she wished she weren't so attractive to men."

"She lies awake all night thinking of the harm she does."

"And wishing she were more like less-gifted girls, who haven't the responsibility of men's lives on their hands."

After a pause Pember began to laugh richly. "George," said he, with the mellow *naïveté* which sits so pleasantly on fat men, "you'd

"You're a man with a great social ability, I can see," he said. Then he took him aside and told him.

"Well," said Pember, when he had heard, "I'd rather you hadn't told me. Visiting them as I do—I'm a Bohemian literary sort of feller, you know, and of course I do visit people who—— Well, I don't mind telling you now that I was simply staggered when I knew what you'd been and gone and done. You're an old bird to be caught with chaff! And such chaff! However, the thing's done; and that's that. I don't see what more I can say, except this: I'm sorry—I'm very sorry."

Mr. Josephs perspired very much. "But," he urged, "what would *you* do?"

"Really," said Pember, "I should act as a gentleman, I hope. Breach simply isn't

done, of course. There you are. That's that."

"I'd give a prize for a solution," said Mr. Josephs.

Pember raised his eyebrows. "Indeed!" said he, languidly. "What sort of prize?"

"A cash one," replied Mr. Josephs, with anguish. "I'd pay fifty pounds to anyone for a mere workable suggestion as to how I could break away from that confounded girl. Have you ever noticed her giggle?"

"Well," said Pember, "I shouldn't like to take money from a friend—such as I consider you, Josephs—but the fact is I could help you, I verily believe, if I could buy myself the leisure. But I'm busy. I'm on a book——"

"What would it cost to buy the leisure?"

"Oh, well," said Pember, "fifty pounds down might do it."

"Done with you!" cried Mr. Josephs.

"Don't go to see her for a week at least," said Pember; "leave all to me. I'll give you your cues."

After Mr. Josephs had left, Pember, with his usual kindness of heart uppermost, somehow thought of George. "I wonder if I couldn't do good old George another good turn?" he said to himself. "John," he added, "ring up the Temple." And to George he said, "I say, old thing, I've been thinking about that last twenty-five pounds you borrowed from Josephs to give me. It don't seem right somehow about my taking it. Of course, it *is* right—but, well, there, I'm a sensitive chap. P'r'aps I'm silly, p'r'aps I'm not. I think I know a way to get him to let you off—he's going to be under a pretty stiff obligation to me soon—if you could see your way to letting me have a tenner out of the twenty-five pounds to—er—are you there?—to pay the expenses of doing the trick. I can't explain, but some day I may be able to tell you the whole story."

Pember then fixed this with Mr. Josephs over the wire; and George was awfully glad to send round his cheque for ten pounds that same morning.

Finance seemed to Pember an easy game to pick up.

Pember was deeply reluctant to bring Caucassie so early into his annuity scheme. Caucassie was a big enough trump to play in a really desperate case. Moreover, the child was now in the north of Berkshire, at one of his country seats, watched over as usual by his mother and Aunt Ada. However, Pember held at the moment a simply dud hand save for Caucassie, so he wrote the youth a letter, saying:—

"Why don't you run up to Town for a week with me, on your own? You respectable people don't know what fun there is in August when there's no lookers-on. I could show you things! By the way——"

The next day Caucassie's racing-car tootled outside Pember's Dover Street windows, and Pember looked out, and there his cousin sat like a young angel; he had rushed up for three days to buy himself some socks.

Caucassie was joyous. "What'll we do?" he asked, trustfully.

"I didn't mean you to take me at my word," said Pember, in a reproachful tone. "However, now you're here I'll do my best for you. Um, what'll we do? Um. I'll take you to see some topping people to-night. Sorter people you never meet in your set."

"Oh, yes, isn't it rotten?" said Caucassie. "We're a lot of stuffs. Well, you're a cheery old bean. We'll put in some sort of a time, anyway."

Pember rang up Daisie and said: "I say, my cousin, the Marquess of Caucassie, is up in Town at a loose end. Let me bring him round to-night." Then he took Caucassie round.

Pember had never seen anything like Daisie and her mother that night. They surpassed themselves and his expectations. Caucassie, of course, was very young—the thing went from the word "go."

Caucassie remained in Town, and his mother, who was Pember's Aunt Ellen, wrote a frantic letter to Pember; and Aunt Ada telegraphed.

Pember replied:—

"DEAR AUNT ELLEN,—I'm at my wit's end. I don't know what to do. Frank is frightfully entangled with a girl years older than himself. I don't mean that she isn't a nice girl and a pretty one, but she's not one of our sort. I can do practically nothing, as I'm so busy. I'm on a book—did I ever tell you? That's what's keeping me away from you all this August—and I simply haven't the money to buy myself the leisure to shepherd the boy as I otherwise could. Why on earth did you let him come up alone?"

While Aunt Ellen and Aunt Ada were ordering and counter-ordering, and ordering emergency suit-cases to be packed, much was happening to the Caucassie family in London.

Daisie, as has been indicated, was *gourmande* for emotional scenes, and having had a real purple-beauty overnight with Caucassie, she telephoned for him early the next morning.

She explained that he must take her round in his racing-car to catch Mr. Josephs before he left his flat in Eccleston Square for Victoria Street, because it was not right and honourable to keep their secret from him any longer.

Caucassie flinched a bit.

"It'll break him," he said.

"You think so?" replied Daisie, very pleased.

"It 'ud cut any man to pieces," added Caucassie, fondly believing himself.

"Oh, dear; oh, dear! What a lot of harm I do!" said Daisie, biting her lip. "Let us go round and tell him at once."

"Let me come," said Daisie's mother, who never missed the vicarious joy of one of these affairs if she could help it.

They found Mr. Josephs snatching a look at the morning paper, in his lounge hall.

"Oh, good morning, darling," said he, reluctantly, when he saw Daisie.

"It will be terrible to tell him," murmured the kind-hearted girl, aside to Caucassie.

Daisie's mother went to Mr. Josephs and patted his hand.

"My dear boy," said she, "my poor boy! When I see you so cheerful and think—and think ——" The old lady heaved her chest.

"I can guess what you have come to tell me." said Mr. Josephs, faintly, looking at Caucassie.

"Oh, Lewis!" said Daisie, going close to him, "you are rather wonderful!"

"Can it be true?" Mr. Josephs murmured.

"'Fraid it is," said Caucassie, in rather a piping voice, but standing up to his sins like a little gentleman. "That is to say——"

"You and Daisie——?" murmured Mr. Josephs.

"What can I say to you, Lewis?" said Daisie, hanging her head.

"Say nothing," replied Mr. Josephs.

"You brave boy!" said Daisie's mother.

"It's pretty awful," said Mr. Josephs.

"It's too sad," Mrs. Bledlow murmured aside to Caucassie.

"I only want you to say that you understand and forgive me, Lewis," said Daisie, hanging her head.

"Oh, please take all that as said," replied Mr. Josephs, taking a few dancing steps away from her.

"He can't bear to speak, poor fellow," said Daisie's mother, drawing Caucassie to the other end of the room, and pretending to show him a stuffed heron, with the greatest delicacy and tact.

"Good-bye, Lewis," said Daisie to Mr. Josephs.

"Good-bye," said Mr. Josephs.

"We shall have to go," said Daisie; "you will understand that I can't stay talking to you here."

"No, no, certainly not!" Mr. Josephs exclaimed.

"Frank is so jealous," said Daisie, with an effect of blushing. "Well, we'd better say good-bye."

Caucassie now tore himself from Mrs. Bledlow's leash, and came up, earnest and blushing.

"Josephs," he said, "Josephs, I——"

"Don't say it, me lord, whatever it is," said Mr. Josephs; "I—I don't think I can bear any more." He looked at Caucassie. "You're young enough to be my son," he said, remorsefully; "still——" He turned away and no one knew what he thought.

"It isn't decent to stay," Caucassie whispered to Daisie.

"But I wish I could comfort him," she replied.

"Her little tender heart!" sighed Mrs. Bledlow. "She has always thought of others since she was *so* high."

"My God!" said Mr. Josephs, suddenly. "I can bear no more!"

"I hope you don't think me an awful rotter," said the young Caucassie, humbly.

"I forgive you, me lord," Mr. Josephs replied.

"It's one of the saddest things I've ever seen," said Daisie's mother, creeping towards the door in a bereaved attitude. "Let me kiss you good-bye, my dear, dear boy."

She kissed Mr. Josephs.

"Frank won't mind this once, Lewis," said Daisie, lifting her sweet face. "Kiss me, if you must."

She kissed Mr. Josephs, and followed her mother languishingly to the door.

Caucassie now hesitated before Mr. Josephs, and, overcome by a gust of emotion, the famous moneylender fell upon his neck and kissed him so heartily that the youth broke and fled in confusion.

That evening there was another little dinner in Pember's rooms, with George and Mr. Josephs present and Pember at his most humorous. *Scallop de saumon avril, Poulet avec sauce de juin,* and *Pêches d'août* figured on the menu, but only Pember in his drollery knew the exact why and wherefore of each significant date, for a man of his traditions would not have dreamed of allowing a lady's name to be bandied at his table.

By this time Aunt Ellen and Aunt Ada had returned to town to protect Caucassie.

Pember went to see them.

"If I could have been with Frank more," was the burden of his cry; "but, busy on my book as I am——"

"Tut, tut!" said Aunt Ellen, imperiously.

"What's a book?" asked Aunt Ada, disrespectfully.

"Damnable (forgive me) as it is," said Pember, grinding his teeth, "money matters to me."

It took the sisters an hour to persuade Pember, but at length they overcame his natural repugnance at such a transaction sufficiently to allow of his agreeing to the sum of two hundred pounds being paid to him on the day Caucassie's engagement with this curious person was broken. Pember explained to them—reckoning from previous calculations—that it would take at least a fortnight, if not longer.

He then ordered some new clothes and promised John his overdue wages in about three weeks.

And he said to Caucassie, with a fine dignified gravity, "Frank, if ever you are in any trouble, I want you to promise to come to me. I'll stand by you, my boy, through thick and thin."

Caucassie brought his trouble to Pember early in September.

"It's awful!" he whispered.

"I know," said Pember.

"Giggle! giggle! giggle! And the old girl nags!" despaired Caucassie.

"I know," said Pember.

"I can't go through with it, cad as I'll feel."

"I know," said Pember.

"She's been engaged no end of times before. I've found out."

"I know," said Pember.

"She's old enough to be my mother."

"I know," said Pember.

"Her mother's longing for her to hurry up and marry, so's she can retire from action."

"I know," said Pember.

"I'll bet I'm not the first chap who's felt this way over it."

"I won't take you," replied Pember, drolly.

"What a lot you seem to know," said Caucassie, beginning to stare.

Pember recovered himself warily, and began to come to terms. "I wish I wasn't so busy with my book!" he started, regretfully.

"AUNT ADA LAID HER HAND ON HER NEPHEW'S HEAD."

"I'll buy all the unborn rights in it," said Caucassie, "if only——"

"Of course, you must get out of it quietly, like a gentleman," Pember remarked. "Breach simply isn't done."

"Oh, no, no, no!" said Caucassie, shivering.

"I'm sorry you got yourself into this mess, Frank," said Pember; "when I introduced you to the Bledlows I somehow thought you were a harder-headed chap. All my fault! All my fault!"

"Oh, come, old thing, no, no!" Caucassie exclaimed.

"I blame myself entirely," said Pember, lighting a cigarette to hide his smile of appreciation of his own humour.

Caucassie had offered Pember a hundred, by the time he left, to get him out with honours.

Now Caucassie was a very nice lad to his mother and Aunt Ada. He dined with them in a chastened mood that evening, and Aunt Ada laid her hand on her nephew's head and said:—

"Should you regret, dear—your cousin——"

Then, in spite of Aunt Ellen's warning glance, Aunt Ada continued:—

"Says he thinks he could get you out of it, *quite* honourably. Oh, quite! Quite!"

Caucassie felt a little shock in his brain; and then his head was unwontedly clear.

"If he could only spare time from his book!" said he, pensively.

There was a pause. Then Aunt Ada:—

"Your dear mother and I were able to arrange that his pecuniary prospects would not suffer, if only——"

Caucassie rose and kissed his mother. He kissed Aunt Ada. "You're toppers!" he said, in a choked voice. He strolled to the door. There he turned, and added: "Good old Pember! Always on the spot! You're makin' it worth his while, aren't you, dears?"

"Two hundred on the day," said Aunt Ada. "He seemed quite confident."

"We could not but notice your unhappiness, darling," said Caucassie's mother.

"I like Pember!" said the Marquess, with deep feeling. "Always up in the morning! Always there!"

He went out rather hastily.

While Caucassie was still in bed next morning, opening his letters and smoking a cigarette, Mr. Josephs was shown in.

"Got your telephone message when I came in last night, me lord," said Mr. Josephs, "and dropped in as requested. Is there——?"

The Marquess pushed the cigarette-box across the table swung over his bed.

"Josephs," he said, flicking a wisp of ash

from the breast of his rose-silk pyjamas, "this ain't a moment for circumlocution, or even the common decencies, or being a gentleman, or anything like that. What I sent for you to know is: I stole Miss Bledlow from you, but whom did you steal her from?"

"Man called 'George,'" said Mr. Josephs.

"I've met a man called George at my cousin Pember's," Caucassie murmured.

"Ah! it was your good cousin——" said Mr. Josephs, with great feeling.

"Who helped you out of the mess honourably?" murmured Caucassie.

Mr. Josephs assented.

"He's a dear chap," said Caucassie, "but as broke as a new kitten. And so busy on his book, that I hope you——"

"Certainly," said Mr. Josephs. "I'd 'a' paid anything to anybody."

"Josephs," said the young Caucassie, now leaning towards the moneylender with a boyish candour, "I want a little talk with you."

At the end of the little talk, Caucassie said: "Well, Broad Walk at three," and Mr. Josephs went away, and the Marquess rose, bathed, dressed with a certain anticipatory pleasure, and drove the racer slickly down to the Temple.

There was George.

"Halloa, George!" said Caucassie. "Excuse my familiarity, but it's the only name I know you by. I've come to ask you two questions, the reasons for which I'll explain to your entire satisfaction by'n by. Josephs stole Miss Bledlow from you, but whom did you steal her from?"

"Pember," said George; "but he was awf'ly decent about it."

"Isn't he a good fellow?" exclaimed Caucassie, with the utmost enthusiasm. "And always *there*. You never miss seeing Pember."

"I'm awf'ly fond of the chap," said George. "Sit down, won't you? As a matter of fact, it was Pember——"

"Who got you out of it honourably?" murmured Caucassie.

"Yes," George replied.

"One other question," said Caucassie, persuasively. "You didn't take the dear chap's precious time and brain——"

"I paid him twenty-five pounds," said George, beginning to be thoughtful.

"That all?" murmured Caucassie.

"Well, there was ten pounds——" said George.

Caucassie left the Temple ten minutes later with the words: "You go up a little stair and through a curtain and there it is."

He drove to Dover Street.

"Mr. Pember's out, your lordship," said John.

"I knew he would be," said Caucassie, "lunchin' with her ladyship, I believe. As a matter of fact, I came to see you, John, to get you to do me a little service this afternoon at five o'clock exactly. And now I'll just use your telephone."

Caucassie held a tender conversation with Daisie.

"Tell Mr. Pember I partic'larly hope he'll dine with me at the Bath Club to-night, John," he said as he went out.

After Caucassie had lunched at one of his other clubs, he drove—taking his chauffeur—to fetch Daisie out to tea.

Never had Daisie found the lad so loving and thoughtful. A perfection not of this world brooded about him. And he said he wanted to see the leaves fall in Kensington Gardens, so they left the car at the Bayswater side with instructions to meet them on the Kensington side, and they walked slowly up the Broad Walk, and by Caucassie's entreaty sat down on a seat.

"Drift, drift," said Caucassie, pointing to a few leaves on the path.

"You *are* dreadful," said Daisie, archly.

"Life is dreadful," said Caucassie, "but so is death."

"Don't be so naughty," replied Miss Bledlow.

"I ought to have told you," said Caucassie.

"Told me what?" she exclaimed.

"I adore you so," Caucassie mourned. "It was hard to do the right thing, and I didn't do it. But this morning something came over me, and I'm going to do it now. You ought to know about my health."

"Health?" echoed the poor girl, starting violently.

Caucassie nodded, and looked into the green spaces.

"Consumptive."

Daisie sat so still that she had quite a statuesque look.

"Mother always takes me to St. Moritz in the winter," said Caucassie, who had never missed a season in Leicestershire since the age of three. "But it's only prolonging the agony. This high colour of mine—all hectic, y'know. One day I shall drift out suddenly like one of those leaves drifts off its tree. Whiff! I'll be gone! Forgive my not tellin' you before. You ought to be marrying my cousin Pember. Not a poor crock like me. Pember's next on the male line; and what a chap he is! You'll see he'll be Prime Minister of England as well as Marquess of Caucassie before he's done. Oh, what a grand chap! But you're looking cold, darling. Quite bleak. I'll take you at once to have tea."

Just as they rose from the seat, Mr. Josephs came walking briskly by, dark and suave, with a large white flower in his buttonhole. He looked longingly at Daisie, and then addressed Caucassie.

"I've just met your cousin Pember. A fine fellow! And what abilities! There isn't a thing your cousin couldn't do if he'd the mind. There isn't his match in England. He's talked of a great deal in political and Court circles, they say. These dark 'orses—these dark 'orses!"

Daisie entered the car, on the Kensington side, with an air of great quietude, and the Marquess sat beside her extolling his cousin Pember all the way to Bond Street.

When they had gone up a little stair and through a curtain, there it was: a small green tea-room; and there was George too, with a very scrap-lot-looking girl, but he hadn't had much time to make better arrangements.

"I was once engaged to him," said Daisie to Caucassie, unable to restrain her pride when she

saw George. "And see what kind of persons I've driven him to! Oh, a girl like me does a lot of harm! It's heartbreaking if you've got feelings. Oh, oh, oh! Look, he's coming! It's like a moth and a candle, isn't it?"

George said, with melancholy, "I won't stay a moment, Dai—Miss Bledlow. I just came over to say, Caucassie, that I dropped across old Pember this morning. He's the most wonderful man in London. This book of his is going to make a direct hit. Great stuff! They say his publisher himself sat up all night reading it. It's all round town already that it's—simp-ly—*scan*—dalous. And it's over-subscribed. Think of the money! Think of the money!"

After George had drifted back to his table Daisie said in a little voice, bending her head very prettily:—

"I ought to tell you, Frank, that once I treated your cousin P-Pember v-very, v-v-very b-b-badly."

As Daisie and Caucassie emerged into Bond Street precisely at five o'clock John came by primly, and Caucassie stopped him.

"Why, John, how are you? Mr. Pember busy to-day?"

John looked indescribably arch, even for a family servant.

"Mr. Pember, me lord, is out driving in the Park with the Countess of Mainborough and Lady Honora."

"A-*hu!*" said the young Caucassie.

"I give it a week, sir," added John, putting his head on one side.

"I withhold my congratulations for one week more, do I, John?" chirruped Caucassie.

"P'r'aps less, me lord—p'r'aps less," replied John.

"What is that?" said Daisie, in a very little voice indeed when she was settled again with Caucassie in the car.

"Well, Lady Mainborough thinks it's practically settled, darling," replied Caucassie, taking Daisie's hand tenderly. "We needn't grudge others happiness like ours, need we?"

"I don't know," said Daisie, looking statuesque.

Pember sauntered round to the Bath Club that evening, wearing his new dinner-jacket and looking his very best self. He found his cousin cheerful, but with an awkward idea about principles and things like that.

"I'm goin' to carry on, old thing," he said to Pember.

Pember's mouth fell open.

"What d'you mean?" he demanded. "My poor boy, you're not——"

"The girl's got to be married this time," replied Caucassie, "and I'm not goin' to shirk it. The weddin' will be quite soon, and quiet. I've talked it all out with Daisie. Only thing I want of you is your promise to be there."

Pember was in a horrid state of anxiety, but he managed to reply hoarsely: "I shall be there. If there's a wedding at all, rely on me at least to be there."

"Thank you, old bean," said Caucassie.

"But don't give up hope!" cried Pember. "Stick to our arrangement. Let me get you out of it."

"No, no!" said Caucassie, like a little man.

Pember thought of Aunt Ellen and Aunt Ada. And he really had a plan. A marquess, he knew, would take some beating, but he'd read in his paper that morning that the Rajah of Apatam, a person easily snared, was arriving in London shortly.

"Wait!" he begged. "Don't throw yourself away. Let me——"

But the young Caucassie was firm. His intrepidity in face of all arguments made Pember despair.

And Pember went home, stricken.

"John," he said, feebly, "something rather awful has happened. Bring me a whisky-and-soda and let me think.

Pember lost half a pound in weight thinking that night, but it wasn't any good. He was aroused from uneasy slumber next morning at ten o'clock by John, who announced that the Marquess of Caucassie was on the 'phone.

"Halloa, Pember!" said Caucassie. "It's fixed for to-day at twelve. We all meet at the church—St. Maria's, West Street, Kensington. Lunch at mother's after. I've made all arrangements. You haven't even to bring the ring, though you gotter be best man. Come on! Hurry up! No excuses! Goo'-bye."

"Help!" said Pember, sweating all over, and flying to his bath.

"This is damnable!" he said, glooming, while John shaved him. But being a man of fertile imagination, he picked up several pieces of his broken scheme and pieced them together in a new pattern. "Let 'em marry, then," said he, getting almost cheery again. "I could come in providing co-respondents after. Something like that. And the plot! I could sell that. It 'ud do for Pinero. I'll write to him and suggest a collaboration. All we want is a good finish. *A good crisp finish.* 'Pon my word!"

Pember was nearly his bright self again, and most resourceful, by the time John had done with him.

When Pember entered the church at twelve, still saying to himself, "Yes, what we want is that crisp finale," there were Aunt Ada and Aunt Ellen, smiling together and nodding and kissing their hands to him from a front pew, and he thought how good it was to stand well with such nice relations. And there were George and Mr. Josephs sitting together in another pew, but Pember hadn't time to do more than raise his eyebrows at them, because Caucassie hurried to clasp his hand.

"Halloa!" said Caucassie; "'nice you look." Pember was got up in morning coat, camellia buttonhole, etc., as befitted the cousin of a marquess about to get married. "I'll put you right," said Caucassie. "Keep cool. Look at me. Cool as a bucket of ice, and I've been around all morning gettin' the special licence and the ring and the clergyman and all. There's nothing for you to do except say your piece. Stand just there." And before Pember had time to do more than shake his head and sigh

and whisper: "Oh, Frank! Frank!" all heads were turned to see Daisie and her mother sailing up the aisle.

The sweet girl was all in white, and looked absolutely bridal in spite of the impromptu haste of the ceremony, and, ignoring Caucassie, she cast herself right at Pember.

"*Isn't* it beautiful," she whispered, "to come together again? Oh, how Frank and I plotted! And he has bought the licence and everything. And isn't he the duckiest boy to give me up to you! And weren't you surprised? And, oh, aren't you going to be ve-ry, ve-ry happy because I am? And I'm trembling from head to foot, but it'll soon be over, and I know I shall be safe with you. I know how you adored me, d-d-didn't you——"

Before Daisie had stopped her enchanting whispering there came out from a vestry a determined-looking clergyman, with a peaked nose, who looked resolutely at Pember, and waved them into line, and Caucassie observed: "Stand just *so*, old bean. It don't take long." Then the clergyman said, before he could be stopped:—

"De-eerly beloved, we are gathered together——"

Down in the church Daisie's mother was whispering to Aunt Ellen how glad she would be to be allowed to be eighty at last; and Aunt Ada was whispering: "So *droll* of our nephew to put it like he did! Most witty! We quite thought—— We're not giving him the two hundred now, of course. He's got *the lady*. We're giving him instead such a useful little butter-dish. Me the butter-dish and my sister the knife. I assure you, Mrs. Bledlow, dear Frank has been working like a horse all the morning with the arrangements."

"IGNORING CAUCASSIE, SHE CAST HERSELF RIGHT AT PEMBER."

Before Aunt Ada had finished whispering to Daisie's mother, the organist, run to earth by the indefatigable Caucassie, was playing The Wedding March.

"Arranged lunch and all," Aunt Ellen continued, presently, as she dropped in a comfortable heap at the head of her table, and gazed politely at the happy unknown faces of George and Mr. Josephs, "wrote out the menus and put such funny names to the dishes. Dear nephew," she said to Pember, who had not spoken a word since his responses, "look at the menu. Done by Frankie. Rather pretty I think the names are, really."

Pember read:—

Œufs d'avril.
Saumon de juin.
Poulet en casserole août——

And then he looked up at Caucassie, who was mixing, with a lamentable ability, the since-famous cocktail, Pale September, dry.

The GENEROSITY of MAGDA

By William Caine

Illustrated by Bert Thomas

ABOUT two o'clock of a late December morning, Bates and I left the *Wire* building, where Bates had been showing me the prodigies which attended the birth of his newspaper. We both lived at the east end of Wandsworth Common, and the tram-line from Blackfriars to Tooting took us most of our way home. When the tram had dropped us, and we had been walking a few minutes, we came to a quiet, tree-bordered road which is called Nightingale Lane, and joins Clapham and Wandsworth Commons. At its entrance we found a little man seated dejectedly on some wooden railings. As we passed him he called out my name in a dismal voice, and I identified him, in the brilliant moonlight, as a friend of mine called Dicky Onions, a small-part comedian, whom I had not seen for some months.

"'MISSED YOUR LAST TRAIN?' I SAID."

After an exchange of civilities and an introduction given to Bates and Dicky, I asked the little man to account for his presence at that place, at that hour.

"I'm resting myself, old boy," said Dicky, "resting my travel-stained and wearies. New boots! Oh, what joy to foot it home to Wimbledon Park in new boots!" I then noticed that his feet were clothed in socks only; his boots stood beside them on the gravel.

"Missed your last train?" I said.

"Oh, no," he said, "I was there on time all right, all right."

"Has the South-Western suspended operations, then?" I asked.

"Oh, no. The old train went all right, all right."

"But, Dicky," I said, "you're playing in 'The Princess of Pumpernickel' at the Bracegirdle now, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes," he said, "I'm doing that all right, all right."

"Don't they give you enough money every Friday, then, to let you travel home more comfortably than this?"

"Oh, yes," he said, "the salary's all right, all right. But I hadn't got my season, and they asked for it. So I'm walking, old boy."

"But," I cried, "this is Friday. On a salary night you ought to have been bulging with money for the fare."

"Well, you see," he said, "Magda got it all."

"Magda!" cried Bates. "Magda Loftus?" The journalist's interest was at last aroused.

"The same dear, sweet lady," Dicky told us. "Oh, my poor little feet!" he added, and softly felt one of them.

"See here, Dicky," I said, "we must know about this. Magda's getting two hundred a week; that's enough for her or anybody. What did she want with your salary too?"

"Well," he said, "there was an old woman came round to beg from her."

"Then she came to the right place, eh?" I said. "Magda's generosity is proverbial, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes," said Dicky, "it's proverbial all right, all right, and be blowed to it! But I wish I may stiffen if I see why." He was evidently bursting with a grievance.

"You tell us," I said, and sat down beside him on the railings. Bates sat on his other side.

"Yes," he said, "tell us, won't you?"

"Why," said Dicky, "there's nothing much to tell. But I can't afford to play at the Bracegirdle if it happens again, not at fifty quid a week, I couldn't. And look at my feet. Gee!" he cried, "they're red-hot, I do believe. And I was so proud of these boots! And I've smoked all my cigarettes, and I wish I was dead, by gum I do!"

I felt in my pocket for my case, but Bates was before me. Dicky thanked him wanly and took a light from him. "There was an old woman came round to beg from Magda—yes?" the journalist prompted.

"It was just a hard-luck story," our little man told us. "She said she'd been dresser once in a theatre where Magda dressed in her room with nine other chorus-girls, it seems, in the days that are no more, the days that nobody ever talks about to Magda now. I dunno what that fool of a sergeant was thinking about to let the old hag get her nose inside the stage-door, but he did, and there was Magda in the passage cooing to Harry Field and me about the bit she wants us to do at her great Lifeboat Matinée next week. She'd just come off, and the beast Opstein stood also by. He'd been holding dear Magda's cloak while she sang that second-act song of hers with the flapper chorus. Harry and I were engaged in drinking in her honeyed words, for she can be ghastly affable when she wants anything done for her; we were also trying not to get blinded by the diamonds that Opstein had stuck all over himself; and while all this was happening the old woman that I told you about slides her bombazine bonnet and head in through the swing-door and sees Magda.

"'Heaven bless her dear eyes!' she shrieked out right in my ear. 'Heaven smile upon the day when she first drew breath! Blessings follow her all the days of her life and reward her for the lump of solid gold that she wears inside her chest and calls a heart! Miss Loftus, my darling, don't you remember your old Cray?'

"'Cray?' says Magda. 'Cray?'

"'Ah,' says the old thing, edging her way right into the passage, 'that's me. Your old Cray that dressed you, lovey, in the Gravesend panto of '93. Ten of you pretty loves I had to look after, don't you remember, dearie, and you called me Mother Cray. There was you and Hilda Fearn, what's principal girl at Middlesbrough this winter, and Gussie Napper, what married the broker's man, and Bess Rutherford, what——'

"'Why,' cries Magda, 'it's old Cray!'

"'That's what I *say*, dear,' says this awful old woman. 'I knoo you'd not forget Mother Cray.'

"'Well,' says Magda, 'and where's the trouble got you this time?'

"'Is it trouble?' cries old Cray. 'Is it trouble, Magda, me ducky? Isn't me poor 'usbin down with ploriacy and Georgine going under an operation at the 'orspital, and how am I to raise the rent with nothing coming in and me out of a shop and my second son on his back with a broken rib, which he's a plumber and fell from a 'ight. And what do you suppose, dearie, we got in the house, love, to pawn? Not so much as a empty sardine-tin, dear, we haven't. And how am I to feed my daughter Clara and her little baby and her 'usbin put away for a year to come and another on the road, love? And *is* December the time of year as you'd choose to be without one blooming lump of coal in the house, dearie, and the man coming to take the sewing-machine away tomorrow, and Jimmy my youngest bit by a dog and all?'

"'This is awful,' says Magda. 'Boys, this is simply terrible. What are we to do?' and tears fairly swam in her lovely blue eyes as she looked from one of us to the other. 'Julius, dear,' she says to Opstein, 'Harry, dear? Dicky, dear, what *are* we to do?'

"I didn't personally see where *we* came in. It seemed to me that this was Magda's little charity. It wasn't as if Harry and I had ever been dressed by this old Cray of hers. Of course, Opstein was in it all right, all right, because that's what he's here for, and he's all over diamonds, and hasn't any other encumbrances except his friendship with Magda. But Harry's got a wife and four kiddies, and his salary's not as big as it will be when the 'Princess' finishes, for he's made very-very good, and he's about the cheapest deal the management's done in twenty years; as for little I, well, I want all *I* get on Friday night, with my old mother and the sisters to keep out of the workhouse, not to mention myself. No, I didn't see where *we* came in. I suppose that's because I wasn't Magda. *She* did all right, all right.

"'Boys,' she goes on, 'did you ever hear a sadder story? Think of this poor old soul with no place, and all those awful things happening to her one after the other.'

"'Yes,' whispered Old Mother's-Ruin at her elbow, 'one after the other, lovey, and I dunno how I'm going to bear with it all if you won't take pity; but there! I know your tender 'eart. Little Maggie Loftus won't let her old Cray go under to this 'eap of woe. I said them very words to young Arthur, my third boy, love, what's been out of employ seven months come Christmas, and that's in a week, dear. "Arthur," I say, "I'll go and tell *'er*, and she never backed down on a friend yet. It'll be all right, Arthur," I says, "and I'll bring you somethink for your pore consumption this night, if only I can git to tell my darling Miss Loftus about yer."'

"'We must have a subscription,' says Magda. 'Boys, get me a piece of paper and a pencil.'

"I was just about to say that I'd fetch the things she wanted, so that I could shove out and go and conceal myself under the stage or somewhere until this business should be settled, but what must the beast Opstein do but pull a long envelope from his coat-pocket and a gold pencil from his waistcoat one and hand them to Magda with that horrible oily smile of his. And, 'You can put me down for a fiver,' he says, and fishes out the note from a pocket-book and gives it to Magda, who took it without so much as a thank you. Old Cray nearly fell down dead. Oh, if only she had!

"At that very identical, unfortunate moment by comes Johnny the Ghost with his fistful of envelopes. I never wanted not to see him before, for while your salary's being placed in your very hand it's difficult to say that you've got no money on you. While he gave Harry and me our envelopes, Magda was busy scribbling on the top of the one Opstein had loaned her, but she wasn't too busy to notice what Johnny the Ghost was doing. 'Put mine in my dressing-room, Johnny,' she says, 'and come back here at once, please,' and goes on scribbling. Then

"'WE MUST HAVE A SUBSCRIPTION,' SAYS MAGDA."

she showed us what she'd written. It was: 'Miss Loftus's subscription for Mrs. Cray, dresser out of employment, and a very sad case. Particularly recommended by Your Magda'—with a capital Y. 'There,' she says, '*that's* the way to do business, boys,' and, getting a pin from old Cray, she stuck her subscription-list up on the notice-board. 'Now, Julius,' she says, 'down with your name and amount,' and Opstein wrote his signature and five pounds.

"'Now, Harry,' she says, 'don't be backward in coming forward,' and Harry, poor ass, gave her a sovereign and stuck his sign manual under Opstein's.

"Just then the chorus began to come off the stage. Johnny the Ghost was back by this time, for he'd only had to open a door to put Magda's envelope into safety. She said a word or two in his ear, and he stood by her side and handed the chorus its envelopes, while Magda made a speech on the merits of the Cray case.

All the girls forked out something, poor little devils! How could they help it? It takes a bit of doing to deny the charitable heart of your lovely leading lady who's worshipped by five continents, especially if you're a silly fool of a chorus-girl with a propensity to be generous any way. So Magda rooked them one by one, and they all put down their names and gave her the money they needed so badly for themselves. Last of all, old Jerry Windle and Millicent Gandy, who'd been doing their scene and duet with chorus, came through the iron door, and Magda tackled them and showed them all the subscriptions of the chorus, and got a quid out of each of them. They couldn't very well give less than Harry had done, though they both loathe Magda just as Magda loathes them. Millicent's too pretty, and Jerry gets too much fat in this piece, for Magda to care about either of them very much, you see.

"Well, the rush was finished, and I still stood there like the ox I am. Couldn't I have faded away in the bustle? Well, I could, of course, but then again I couldn't. Who said moral courage? But I did hope that Magda might perhaps have forgotten insignificant little me. Do you suppose she'd done any such thing? Oh, yes, I don't think.

"'And now, Dicky,' she says, 'what are we to say from you, dear? It's a nice little list,' says she, 'but it can still be improved, and your name and a nice little sovereign'll make it look lovely.'

"A nice little sovereign! I've got such a lot of nice little sovereigns to pin up on green baize notice-boards and turn into Unsweetened for old Mother Crays, haven't I? Oh, dear, yes!

"'Come, Dicky,' she says, and fixed her eyes upon me with hypnotic effect. Do you know what I did? Well, I'll tell you, for you'd never guess, not in one thousand years and five minutes.

"I went mad, that's what I did.

"I took all the money that was in my envelope and gave it to her, and wrote my name for it at the bottom of the list, 'Richard Onions and so much.'" Dicky paused impressively, but neither Bates nor I asked him for the figure of this subscription, because we both knew that the amount of a small actor's salary is the one thing about which he is sensitive.

"It was the biggest amount on the list," he went on. "Even Opstein opened his nasty eyes when he saw himself beaten by Richard Onions. Yes, it was a corky one for Opstein.

"I expected Magda to be pleased, but she wasn't—at least, not very much. She patted my cheek—here, this is the spot where her lovely fingers fell—and she said, 'Good old Dicky.'

"Then she took all the money she'd made us subscribe and handed it to old Cray, and she says, 'There, Mother Cray. Take that home, and good luck to you, and it's a real pleasure to me to give it to you.'

"To *give* it, mark you, boys!

"'And now,' she says, while the old trout exploded into thanks, 'stow all that and off you go. I've got to do my next bit here, so we needn't keep you. Good luck, and a Merry Christmas.' And how much of what *her* envelope contained do you suppose went out of the theatre to the nearest public accompanied by old Mother Cray's laudations?

"Gentlemen—nix!"

Dicky paused and took another cigarette.

"Well," he said, "I expect I must pad the hoof homewards, or die the death of a frozen fool. Gee! my poor feet!"

"BATES'S MAGDA LOFTUS PAR MADE A BEAUTIFUL AND TOUCHING STORY."

"And didn't she leave you a cent?" I asked.

"Not so much as a red one. I never thought how empty my breeks pocket was till I got to Waterloo, as I've told you. One is naturally careless of money on a Friday, you know. And I didn't want to go back and try to touch one of the boys. I'd nothing to pawn on me but my waistcoat, and I didn't want to catch pneumonia, and, besides, the train had gone by that time. So I started to step it to Wimbledon, and I'm still on my way, as you see. It wasn't so bad for the first mile or so, but then these boots began to give me news of themselves, and this is just about my twentieth halt for sheer agony. Oh, it's jolly to be alive!"

"But you knocked Opstein," I said. I felt that Dicky needed comfort.

"Oh, yes, I knocked Opstein all right, all right," he said. "But, laddie, it's nothing to the way I've knocked myself. How am I going to do my dance to-morrow? Tell me that."

"Well," said Bates, "this has been worth ten bob to me, I shouldn't wonder. They're always glad of a Magda Loftus par, and this'll make a good one."

"You wouldn't dare!" cried the little man, hotly. "You didn't say," he added reproachfully to me, "that this man was a journalist."

"Oh, be easy," said Bates; "it wouldn't *sell* the way *you've* told it. When Magda appears in print she's got to be everything that's lovely and fine-natured. I'll call it 'The Generosity of Magda,' and we'll get some old woman's picture taken to accompany the tale. And I suppose you'll have no objection to being starred as the man who beat Opstein? It'll be a little ad. for you, Mr. Onions."

Dicky thought this over. "No," he said, "be hanged to it! Leave me out. And if you must pile it on, pile it all on Magda—I expect she only *forgot* to put in any of her own money. These big artistes—they're so absent-minded."

And with that he—having pulled on his second boot—rose from his rail. So did we, and we all went on together to Wandsworth Common. At Wandsworth Common Dicky got a bed, as I hope you will be glad to know.

Bates's Magda Loftus par made a beautiful and touching story. Dicky need have had no fear of Bates.

But I am not a journalist.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 52.

(The Fourth of the Series.)

Two rival dogs of war: unless I blunder,
Last is the top dog now, and t'other's under.

1. Stitched up, no doubt, but with the wool inside.
2. You might plead this and won't: let law decide.
3. You have ten score, of each one makes a part.
4. Quiet in mien, but songs are in its heart.
5. The four chief points are found in this reply.
6. The tragic name includes the tragic cry.
7. 'Tis inwardly complete; nay, inwardly,
   To part it were disloyal policy.
8. Don my sou'wester? Not for such a gale!
9. I'm keen—there's that within which tells a tale!

D. M.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 53.

The greatest and the least are manifest.

1. Joseph and Abraham the man suggest.
2. Three hints: one sixty, Westminster, and Rome.
3. Fate robs her of her husband or her home.
4. One who despises "unimpassioned song."
5. Do what you will: here you will not go wrong.
6. A war-club take, behead, remove the gun.
7. With six of nine of one of nine 'tis done. PAX.

Answers to Acrostics 52 *and* 53 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on October 9th.*

The answer to each acrostic must be on a separate piece of paper; at the foot of each answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else. This pseudonym should be limited to one word.

Two answers may be sent to any or every light.

ANSWER TO No. 51.

1.	P	owde	R
2.	A	lic	E
3.	R	in	G
4.	A	nn	A
5.	D	onizett	I
6.	I	bse	N
7.	S	ho	E
8.	E	isteddfo	D

NOTES.—Light 2. Lewis Carroll. 4. Or "Ada."

Result of the Eighth Series.

The acrostics of the eighth series proved to be too easy, and as many as thirty solvers answered them quite correctly. One of the thirty, Corisande, is ineligible for a prize; and another one, disregarding the italicized rules, and the emphatic note in the June number, gave no name and address. The twenty-eight solvers who answered all the lights and conformed to the rules will divide the prizes, each one's share being nine shillings.

Aber, Mr. W. W. Grundy, Bowden, Sunninghill, Ascot; Altus, Mr. J. G. Ambridge, 90, Knightsbridge, S.W.1; Brigid, Mr. R. N. Scales, 62, Palmerston Road, Dublin; Crotal, Miss G. W. Hughes, Brier Hill House, Northampton; Enos, Mr. W. S. Cool, 3, St. James's Square, S.W.1; Fifi, Second Lieut. D. F. Ferguson, R.M.A., Eastney Barracks, Portsmouth; Flapper, Mr. J. Charrington, Shenley Grange, Barnet, Herts; Gabriel, Mr. A. G. Le Maitre, St. Salvators, St. Andrews; Geomat, Mr. G. E. Matthews, 53, Stockwell Green, S.W.9; H. H., Mr. E. W. M. Lloyd, Hartford House, Hartley Wintney, Hants; Junius, Mr. F. C. W. Grigson, Amesbury, Hindhead, Surrey; Kola, Mrs. R. Absalom, 15Y, Peabody Avenue, S.W.; Landor, Mr. H. W. Arnold, 7, Forester Road, Bath; Lobo, Mrs. L. Morris, 74, Larch Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2; Manora, Mr. G. W. Sealy, 19, Redcliffe Gardens, S.W.10; Mersey, Mrs. J. H. Heeley, Elm Lodge, Formby, Lancs; Mike, Mrs. Wyndham Peel, Marquette, Cockington, Torquay; Monachus, Mr. D. G. Robertson, Torrie, Newbury, Berks; Perky, Mr. A. T. Hill, Incents, Berkhamstead, Herts; Sant, Mr. W. H. Harsant, Tower House, Clifton Down Road, Clifton, Bristol; Sentot, Mr. D. W. S. Colquhoun, Westholme, Galtrim Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow; Somerford, Mrs. Roper Tyler, Barton House, Tetbury, Glos; Splosh, Mr. L. Dale, Christ's Hospital, Horsham, Sussex; Tantalus, Mr. E. T. Hardman, The Coign, Charterhouse, Godalming, Surrey; Tuph, Mrs. M. Clark, The Elms, Shepperton Green, Middlesex; Wals, Mr. W. Stradling, Norris Hill, E. Cowes, I.W.; Yoko, Mr. F. Rawson, 10, Richmond Mansions, London, S.W.5; Zenas, Mr. F. S. Pilleau, 8, Meadow Way Green, Letchworth, Herts.

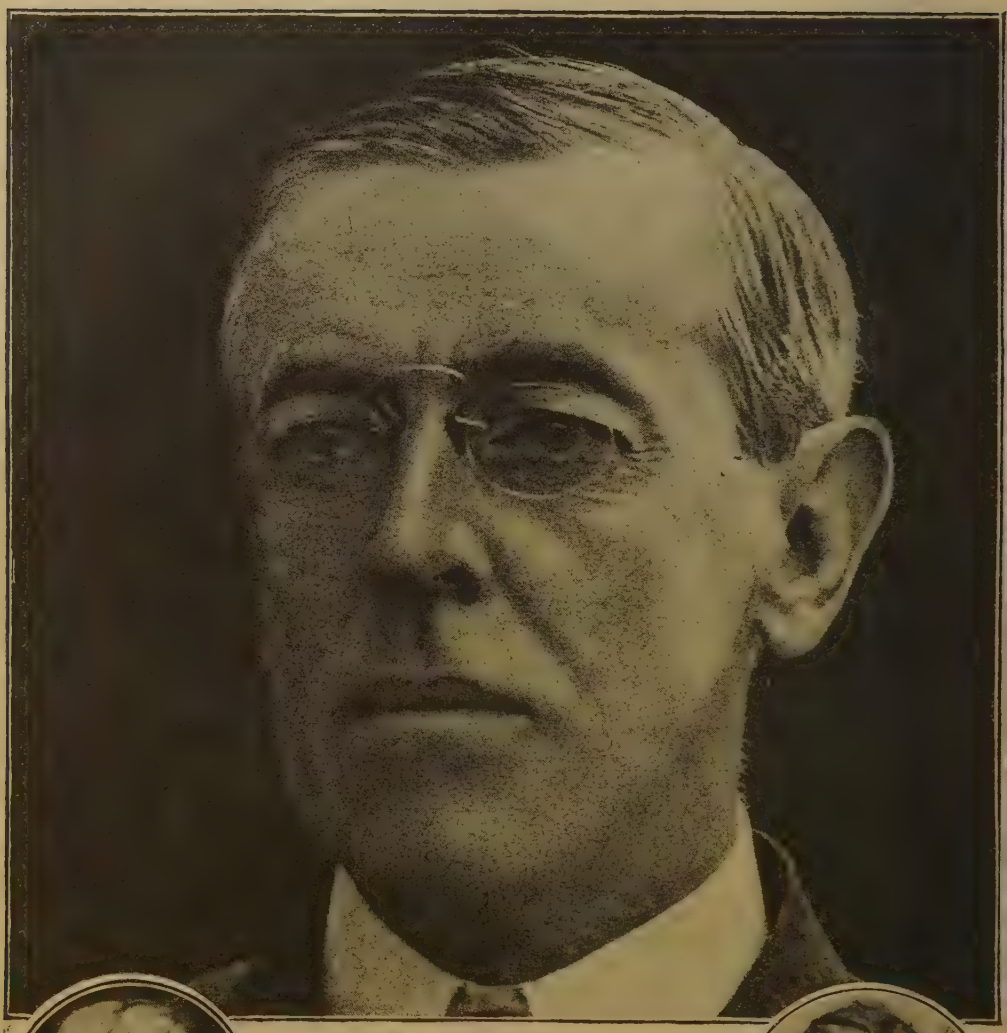

Photo. Pach.

Photo. Sport and General.

Photo. Topical.

A Study of President Wilson

BY

T. P. O'CONNOR.

Photo. Topical.

Photo. Topical.

The following character-study of President Wilson will, we think, be found to give the most striking impression of the man yet published. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., has been for many years a close student of the writings and speeches of the President, and has always been in sincere and profound sympathy with the President's political views. A visit to America, extending over twelve months—a good part of which was spent in Washington—gave Mr. O'Connor further opportunities of studying the President from close at hand. Finally, Mr. O'Connor was honoured by the President with two personal interviews.

E is the son of the manse and of the library—of America and of Ireland, and he looks it. On no man's face and mind have I seen such unmistakable marks of the legitimacy of his origin. His grandfather and his grandmother came from Ulster, and the grandfather was a journalist most of his life. His father was a Presbyterian clergyman. Both grandfather and father, therefore, belonged to the cultured classes, were both men of high intellectual gifts, were both great readers and great students. If Mr. Wilson were an Englishman he would be described as the embodiment of the Nonconformist. As an American, he cannot be so easily classified, for America gives its colour to religion as to other things it derives from the Old World. If to-day Mr. Wilson is one of the great students, one of the great thinkers, a supreme master of the written and the spoken word, it will be seen that he comes by all these things in direct descent from his family stock, and from his earliest environment. Educated in all kinds of schools and colleges, he yet owes most of his intellectual impulses and equipment to his father. From the father, too, he derives that intense sense of the humorous in life which underlies the severity of expression and the austerity of language. I have seen it stated by his intimates that his photographs never seem like him to those who know him. The high brow, the firm mouth, the strong jaw, the severity of expression create a Woodrow Wilson who is unlike the Woodrow Wilson they know. It is probably because of the self-consciousness which only actors and actresses are able to drop when they stand before the camera; and self-consciousness always gives to the face a certain super-seriousness which is not true to the ordinary expression. The Woodrow Wilson of private and intimate life is remarkable by the twinkle in the eye and by the mobility of the mouth, which seems too tightly compressed in the photograph. It is characteristic of his mind that one of his favourite authors throughout all his life is Charles Dickens. He shares with Dickens close powers of observation of the men around him, even when he has to look at them in the midst of crowds, through the mists of distractions, of ceremonials, and with the preoccupation of a speech to be made. He can come back from a public occasion, where things are always trying to the chief figure, not tired and not bored. He has found distraction in studying the figures around him, and he can enliven his family and his friends by reproducing some of the men and the incidents that have appealed to his sense of humour.

It is thus that one may describe President Wilson, in spite of his Ulster ancestry, as in some respects the most American of Americans. The American mind takes serious things seriously, and when it enters on a job—like this war, for instance—it is ruthless. But ordinarily the American will not take things tragically. There is a certain love of persiflage—especially in the conversation between men and women—which always takes me back to a French rather than to an English or a Scotch atmosphere. The typical American also rarely takes himself too seriously. Perhaps the spirit of equality and simplicity, which are the dominating qualities of the country, would make such a thing too ridiculous. This somewhat Gaelic savour of point of view and of conversation may come also from that widespread Celtic mind which has crept its way everywhere in America with the subtlety and irresistibility of the ivy around the tree or the house. Whatever the reason, in spite of the severity of feature and of expression which tells of the high purpose and the burning ardour of Mr. Wilson's temperament, one must never think of him as a man of artificial and unnatural seriousness. Nor is he the aloof creature that is sometimes thought. Of the many things he inherited and was taught by his father, that of being a man among men was one of them. Everybody that knew the old, courteous, and cultured clergyman—although a professor of abstruse theologies—recalls that he won the hearts not merely of his congregation but of all his fellow-citizens by that freedom

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and geniality of intercourse that comes from the natural politeness of a kindly heart. Here again might I not suggest that there enters into him some of the Celtic spirit that you can feel all around you in America ?

When President Wilson left the University of Princeton to become Governor of New Jersey it was assumed that he would be a mere plaything in the hands of the practical politicians. Yet it came to be that New Jersey found itself the first, or almost the first, to translate into law and into action those things which were calculated to restore to the people their heritage in the control of their laws, of their law-givers, and of the gigantic resources of their great nation. Compared with the mighty arena on which the President now appears, his record as Governor of the State of New Jersey must appear small ; but when the history comes to be told in retrospect, his achievements in that position will be read as one of the most remarkable examples of a great Parliamentarian and an ardent visionary managing men and events and leading them to his great purpose.

And now, what were the methods and qualities by which Mr. Wilson, as Governor of New Jersey, was able to accomplish these modern miracles ? It was, first, because he was just the opposite of what people thought him to be. Here was not a Puritan professor, but a man companionable, genial, tolerant, unruffled, good-tempered, who knew men and how to manage them. In other words, there was a great thinker and a great student on the one hand, with tremendous seriousness of purpose but with the saving sense of humour which enabled him to meet all sorts and conditions of men and by sheer geniality and by the impression of utter sincerity, as well as the authority of a superior intellect, to win them to his side—almost to move them like pawns on a chessboard. Mr. Wilson had not studied Charles Dickens in vain.

But, of course, there were other qualities in the Governor which accounted for his marvellous success. He was honest, he was courageous, he was tenacious. He not only had the vision of a people to be emancipated from the thraldom of plutocracy, but he had the common sense, the dexterity, above all he had the inflexible will to see that visions become realities. Against such an unusual combination of qualities, self-interested corruption, evil traditions fought in vain. Before such a stone wall of clearness of thought and immutable purpose the evil things beat their heads in vain. There was, too, no false dignity in this college professor. When obstacles seemed insurmountable he calmly left the big chair and the office and went out on to the platform. He did not mind being called a stump-speaker. He went to the people whom he loved and for whom he was fighting, and brought the broad, encasing air of public discussion into the poisoned atmosphere of secret committees and unholy combinations.

I will presently allude to the extensions of this underlying principle of so much of Mr. Wilson's action—that of intimate touch with the people and with the representatives of the people —when I come to deal with him as President. I go on for the moment to another and very striking fact in his career. Mr. Wilson is human, and human beings do not carry through their lives the rigidness of a definite purpose to a definite goal without some diversions through conditions more powerful than any human will. But in so far as any human being could do, Mr. Wilson has pursued his purpose in life more inflexibly than almost any man with whose history I am familiar. The astonishing thing is not that he is President—not that he should be just the man for the Presidency at this hour—it would be more astonishing if he were not. For the Presidency is but the fruition—the natural consequence of uninterrupted preparation and training for the Presidency. In just as real a sense as the fighters in the ring, with every muscle and nerve and organ deliberately trained for the moment of battle, was Mr. Wilson trained in every one of his faculties for the high office he now holds and for the supreme hour in which he exercises omnipotence. He was not only a student from his earliest years—that he would almost inevitably be from his heredity and his environment—but he was a student of the very subjects which would fit a man for public life. He took his mathematics in such small doses as were necessary to qualify in examinations. He was not deeply interested in science ; it is recorded that he received almost the lowest mark possible at an examination in astronomy. He concentrated on the studies that are more or less associated with the political life of a country—jurisprudence, political economy, history. These were also the subjects he taught when he had to search for a living, and in teaching, of course, increased his knowledge of them. I do not suppose there is an ancient or modern classic which Mr. Wilson has not studied and analysed. He was a student especially of our own British Constitution, and for many years he advocated reforms in the political system suggested by our methods. He wrote extensively in favour of our system of Cabinet responsibility as opposed to the American system of an almost complete gulf between the Executive and the Legislature. I have no reason to believe that he has changed this view, in spite of the Presidency and in spite of the war.

Just for a brief space Mr. Wilson allowed himself to drift into a temporary departure from the straight line of self-development for public affairs. He set up his shingle, with a partner, as a practising lawyer in the city of Atlanta. It would be an absurd generalization to say that the practice of the law is a waste of the time of a man who is destined for public life. It was as a nomad barrister on the circuit of rural and primordial Illinois that Abraham Lincoln learned things and men, sharpened his wits and perfected his use of words until he became the ideal President for the difficult times of the Civil War and the author of such masterpieces of literature as the speech at Gettysburg. But Mr. Wilson had not the same temperament or upbringing as Lincoln, and the devotion of years to the decision of the rights and wrongs of petty

PRESIDENT WILSON'S SIGNATURE TO A DOCUMENT MAY AFFECT THE FUTURE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.
Photo, Topical.

individuals would have placed upon his mind and body a strain which they could not bear. Anyhow, a lucky destiny settled the question for him. Mr. Wilson had not to devote himself to clients, for no clients came, and his straying from the path of self-development along the lines unsuitable to him was but a temporary and unimportant episode.

He returned to his original plan and to the rooms of the professor and the student. I have mentioned jurisprudence, political economy, and the like as the main subjects on which Mr. Wilson concentrated his mind. But there was one other department of human learning to which he devoted as much attention, and which explains him as much as his other studies. That was literature. The love of literature was, of course, not only inherited but stimulated by his father, and was with Mr. Wilson accordingly from his childhood. But even without his father and without his schools and Universities Mr. Wilson would have loved literature. He is a man of letters to his finger-tips. I am not sure that he could not be described as the greatest man of letters in the world of political men to-day. It is characteristic of a mind that is at once radical in vision and intensely practical in action that Mr. Wilson still adheres to the classics as the greatest instrument in the creation of the cultured mind. As to the severity with which he imposed the study of classics on himself I have a word to say later. He is an omnivorous reader. His famous doctor, Admiral Grayson, told me that one of the bad habits he had was that of getting so absorbed in a detective story as to remain awake, often till four o'clock in the morning—precious hours taken from the rest necessary to the fulfilment of his hard duties.

What has been his favourite reading? When I read, and still more when I heard, a speech of Mr. Wilson's I came to the conclusion that he had modelled his style largely on the Greek classics. Of the qualities of the Greek style I would put utter simplicity, even austerity, of language as the chief excellence. Lucidity is a necessary combination of simplicity. If you recall to your minds the passages in the Greek classics which have moved you most, and remain with you always, you will recall at the same time that the most moving, the most tragic things were told with Olympian self-restraint. Take, for example, the story of the death of Socrates, in Plato's "Phædo." The whole thing is in almost matter-of-fact style, and yet how it thrills you to the very heart of your heart! My guess as to the sources of Mr. Wilson's literary style was more correct than I thought. A friend of Mr. Wilson told me that he had studied the orations of Demosthenes until he could read them as easily as if they were in the English tongue. Those who recall Demosthenes will remember that austere simplicity is also the chief mark of his style. I am told that even now, amid the cares of the Presidential office, Mr. Wilson goes back occasionally to the great Greek orator for solace and for inspiration. I would conjecture that Mr. Wilson has got some of his wondrous style also from the great masters of French literature, which in this quality of austere severity of language is the nearest to the great Greek model. He has been also a diligent student of our great English masters of style—especially among the politicians. He

knows Edwin Burke, he knows Gladstone and Bright intimately. He learned some of his economics from Richard Cobden.

And now I put this devotion to the highest in literature as part of the methodical, uninterrupted, tranquil self-development for public life which I think is a remarkable feature in the life of Mr. Wilson. This steady self-development was just the thing which the world didn't know — and especially the practical politician. When they asked him to leave the tranquillity of a University for the turmoil of electioneering and political life, they thought that they had caught an amateur. The fact was that they discovered a man trained by long-life effort to be a master of the craft of political life. When he read Demosthenes he was preparing not for an examination in a University hall, but for the platform and big popular meetings in Trenton or in Washington. One other remarkable proof of the thoroughness of the training to which Mr. Wilson devoted himself I must give. He has a fine tenor voice, and he was able to cultivate it in a Glee Club. But his idea was not to improve his voice as a singer, but as a speaker. It was a part of the education that, like the professional singer and unlike most orators, he knows all the science of the regulation of his breathing when speaking. This is why his voice, though not very resonant, is able to penetrate to the last man in the very large audience in the largest hall, and that every word tells with its full effect. The austerity of the language reaches the mind immediately by its simplicity, but the emotion behind the austere words and behind the austere look is conveyed by the beautifully modulated voice—calm, like Bright's, but moving like Bright's because of the underswell of emotion in its deep tones.

And now I come to the fruition and blossoming of all this self-development in Mr. Wilson as President. In some respects he merely repeated the methods which had already done such effective service in New Jersey. He proceeded without haste, but without rest, to carry into the solid fact of statute the visions of the election programme. The tariff was reduced, the conditions of labour were enormously improved—a passionate sympathy with the underdog is one of his most powerful impulses—above all, he reformed the banking system of the country, so that the omnipotence of the banks and a few great financiers, which held the one hundred and ten millions of the American people to strangle or to release according to their will or self-interest, was destroyed, and destroyed for ever. To-day, burdened by gigantic expenditure and the other terrific difficulties of America in a great war, men draw their breath as they think of the crashing abyss of panics and nation-wide impotence from which Mr. Wilson's banking legislation has saved the country.

And the methods in Washington were again the same as in New Jersey. There was the immediate breakdown of that old tradition which dug a gulf between the chief magistrate of the country and the Legislature. In the early days of the Republic the President delivered his message to the Legislature orally. But in the days of Jefferson, either because he was inferior as a speaker to what he was as a writer or because he genuinely felt that such oral communication between the President and the Legislature smacked too much of the ceremonials of the Royalty which America had thrown off—whatever the reason, the written message had been substituted for the spoken word, and this precedent was followed by subsequent Presidents. It was in accord with Mr. Wilson's thought and temperament that he should break with this tradition and seek at once the free intercourse between the representatives of the people and the chief executive, and accordingly he renewed the old practice of delivering his message to Congress in their presence and by word of mouth. Again, as in New Jersey, he acted on the principle that the Legislature should have a leadership direct and open, and accordingly he took an active part, in consultation with members of Congress, in shaping and in pushing Bills, and thus the Bills got through. They were not still-born or strangled at birth or overlain, as has been the case with so many other projects of other Presidents as eager as Mr. Wilson to push their ideas to the statute book, but without the clear vision and the iron tenacity of purpose which he brought to the task.

Let me now give something of the daily life and habits of Mr. Wilson, drawn largely from the communications to the Press of Admiral Grayson, and from an excellent article of Mr. David Lawrence in the *Saturday Evening Post*. No man has played so large and so beneficent a part in the life of the President as his physician. When Mr. Wilson came to the White House he was not in good health. Like many other brain workers of sedentary employment, he suffered a good deal from indigestion. Admiral Grayson changed all that by insisting that the President should take constant exercise and as constant relaxation. The result is that almost daily and in all kinds of weather the President takes exercise regularly, mainly on the golf links. He is, from boyhood, as a son of the horse-raising South, an expert horseman, and takes his exercise a good deal on horseback. In addition, he has learned a good many of the exercises which have been taught to the world by the Swedes, and often stops in the middle of his hardest and most important work to freshen himself by going through some of the exercises. He is careful and regular in his food, and attends to the warnings of his physician whenever his inclination suggests food that does not agree with him. I gather that he shares with the majority of his countrymen and countrywomen a perilous love of sweets, but he has had to control that national weakness. He is an enormous drinker—let me add, of cold water. Admiral Grayson has insisted on amusement equally with exercise, with the result that almost nightly, or every second night, you see that the President has paid a visit to a theatre, or even to what we should call a music-hall in England. It is one of his fortunate characteristics that he can throw off all his

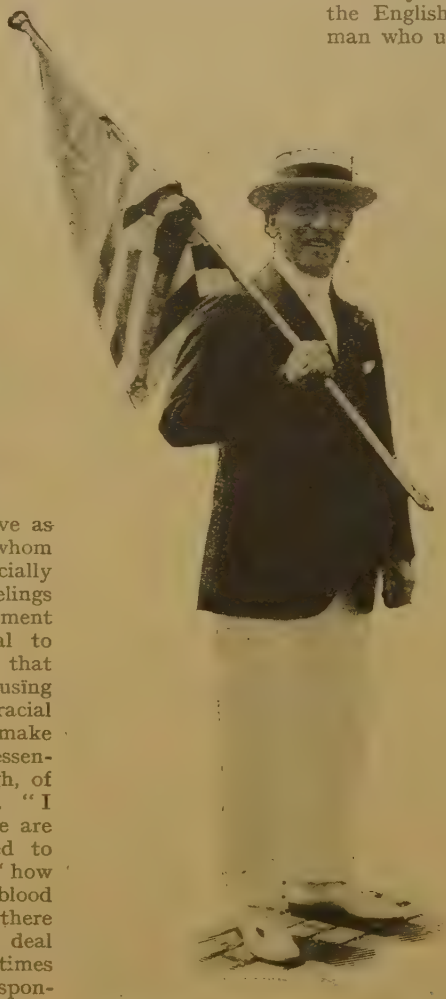
responsibilities the moment he is exercising or amusing himself. Within one minute of his entrance into his box, and after the lifting of the curtain, Mr. Wilson, I was told by Admiral Grayson, forgets even that he is President of the United States. This determined detachment extends itself to the golf links so mercilessly that his partners are strictly warned against mentioning any public affairs during the game; it is reported that one unhappy man who forgot this rule has never been asked to be the partner of the President again. The President works very hard, but he brings system and healthfulness and at once conservation and guidance of energy into his work as into everything else. Though, as has been seen, no man can be more of a man among men, more tactful, more persistent, more tenacious, yet he prefers to get his communications through the written rather than through the spoken word. He is not one of the men who can expend his nervous energy in suffering more than a certain number of fools gladly. It is to him, I have heard, almost a personal and physical pain to have to listen to the repetition of the same thing by the same man or by many men over and over again. Hence his preference that such of the things brought to him should be brought in writing. As Mr. David Lawrence puts it, "Mr. Wilson does business by a minimum of personal conference and a maximum of personal correspondence." This tendency to communication by the written rather than by the spoken word is so strong that, even as intimate an official as Mr. Tumulty, if he be going to make a speech, gets a memorandum from the President—I have seen several of them—in which he sketches out what he considers the proper theme and the most desirable method of treating it. These communications, like most, if not all, of those from the President's own hand, are printed on the typewriter which he uses habitually, and with a neatness and accuracy which a professional typist might envy. The President also uses shorthand, which he taught himself, a great deal. As this sketch has already conveyed, he looks above all to results. Instead of working like a bee in a glass hive—as Lord John Russell used to say of the members of the House of Commons—Mr. Wilson prefers to do his tremendous work behind closed doors. He paid a visit of eventful importance to the Atlantic Fleet—delivered a moving speech amid surroundings as solemn as ever encompassed a great fleet of sailors going to the heart of a great war. But neither the visit nor the speech was recorded. The President deliberately excluded the reporter, the movie man, and even the nation. Similarly, the work inside the White House, incesssant, unrelenting, as it is unhasting, is known only to the little family of officials that live within its precincts, for most of the work is in constant memoranda and by telephone—of which the President has made more frequent use than any of his predecessors.

THE PRESIDENT DELIVERING HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Photo. Sport and General.

Let me sum up, then, the characteristics of this remarkable and potent figure, as I see them—necessarily from the outside. To a cold, clear, enormously stocked brain there are added a warm heart, a sincere and even volcanic sympathy with all the under-dogs of the world, a saving sense of humour which takes everything seriously and nothing tragically, himself included, who combines the gifts and characteristics of the mixed race from which he comes—the fire, vehemence, and even impulsiveness of the Celt with the onlooking and arresting caution of the Scot. Such is the man who has to save the world for democracy. If any man can accomplish that tremendous task, it is he who is to-day by instinct, by conviction, by heart as well as by head, the world's truest democrat.

The foregoing sketch of President Wilson was written some weeks ago in America, and before I had had the honour of a second interview with him. This interview confirmed in a strange, almost uncanny, way the impressions as to his inner personality which I have set forth in the article. There is a great difference between the President in the photograph and the President in private conversation. The face loses all the severity; its dominant expression is sincerity, simplicity, frankness, the expression in the individual of that Republican simplicity which the Fathers and Founders of the nation set as the model for all their successors, and which not even the growth of wealth, luxury, and power has succeeded in dethroning from the hearts of all that is good in American life. Nor is there any austere reserve and cautious reticence in the intimate conversation of the President. I would say that sometimes even he is as impulsive as the Irishmen from whom he comes; and especially impulsive when his feelings of personal attachment or sympathy appeal to him. I have heard that he once gave an amusing description of the racial components that make up his character—essentially simple, though, of course, also complex. "I do not know"—here are the words attributed to the President — "how much of Irish blood there is in me, but there must be a good deal from my sense sometimes of delightful irresponsibility; but then I know there must also be a good deal of the Scotchman in me, because that watchful and cautious gentleman always keeps the other fellow in order"; or, as the legal documents say, "words to that effect." There is certainly this much of the Irishman in the President, that he loves the Irish, as is shown by the crowd of Irishmen by whom he is surrounded. When I paid my visit to the White House, the policeman at the outer gate was named Conlan; he was succeeded by Mr. Tumulty, the President's secretary; in the next room was an assistant secretary whose name is Brehony—Celtic for the English name "Judge"; and the gentleman who ushered me into the President's room was named McKenna. On the President's views as to the Irish problem, I must refer the reader to his public utterances.



THE PRESIDENT TAKING PART IN A BIG PARADE.
Photo. Topical.

The President is a splendid story-teller; he told me one or two even during our conversation; always to the point under discussion; always terse; always humorous. There is a delightful story about him in one of his biographies, that at the end of a long and hard day during the New Jersey struggle the staid Governor burst with a friend into a negro dance and a negro song; typically American, and especially typically American of his native South, that has given to the whole nation that delicious sense of humour which is the best cure for not only gloom, but pretence and superciliousness. Finally, when I repeated to the President the story that he used to remain reading a detective novel up to four o'clock in the morning, he said with a smile that he did not think anybody or anything could ever keep him awake till four o'clock in the morning. Otherwise, I think this sketch of him may be taken as absolutely accurate.

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A LITTLE PUBLICITY

by

Sophie Kerr

Illustrated by E.F. Sherie

A story which deals with masculine finance pitted against feminine finesse.

"BUT if you'd only give me a regular allowance, Dean, I should know just what to expect each month, and I could plan the house expenses and my own, too, so much better and more economically. As it is now, I don't know when to pinch and scrimp, nor when to have a little spree of extravagance. I should like to run things in a businesslike way——" Mrs. Teller broke off suddenly at sight of the indulgent smile with which her husband was regarding her. Dearly as she loved Dean Teller, she felt a naughty impulse to give him a hard slap, just as if he were an exasperating, teasing little boy, for she had kept back the most important fact, *i.e.*, that she had hardly a penny in her purse and hated unspeakably to ask him to replenish it.

"Oh, Bets, you do tickle me so," said her husband, the smile spreading to a grin. "If I gave you an allowance you'd be worse off than you are now, for you know I'll get you anything you want. Mother always charged everything, and father paid the bills, and I'll challenge anybody to find a better adjusted and more carefully-run household than theirs. But you're bitten by this craze to be businesslike and have a budget, and all that sort of nonsense that the women's magazines spread about—stuff written by women who never kept house in their lives and wouldn't know how to boil an egg."

"You don't know anything about who writes for women's magazines," said Mrs. Teller, swallowing hard and trying to smile easily. "So that isn't an argument at all. But, Dean, dear, do let's try the allowance system for a month—just one month, to see how it goes. Won't you?"

"I suspect you've been buying a new hat and don't want me to know how much it cost," said Mr. Teller, dodging the direct question. "Come, confess, Bets—is it a hat? I'm a good sport—I'll pay the bill, no matter what it is. It's worth a lot to me to have my wife get all the pretty clothes she wants, because she sets them off so well."

He got up from the breakfast table, with its pleasing blue china, its bowl of brilliant fruit, and its shining silver reflected in the deep mahogany, and came around to his wife's side, putting an affectionate arm about her.

"Don't look so serious, sweet," he said. "Your little extravagances don't worry me a bit. I hate to hear you talking about money, anyway. Everything I've got is yours—don't you know that? You just go ahead and buy what you want and send me the bill. My credit's good, I believe. I'll tell you in a minute if you're flying too high."

"But, Dean," said Elizabeth, leaning her head against his shoulder, "Dean, dear—just for me—just to humour me—won't you try this the other way? You're awfully generous and good, but—but—I hate to ask you for money, and—and I hate never to know just where I stand. You say everything you have is mine, and I know you mean it, but the trouble is, it's mine only when you give it to me. It's not mine outright, even a little bit of it. It makes me feel so dependent."

Dean Teller loosened his arm from around his wife's waist and an injured look came into his very handsome eyes. "You don't want to feel dependent on me?" he asked, in tones of incredibility. "Why, Bets, you make me feel as if you didn't really love me. It's the great joy of my life that I have you to take care of and buy things for—I love to feel that I can make you comfortable and give you pleasure. I—I can't understand how you can say such things."

She knew it was no use to go on with it, so she gave in. "I didn't mean to hurt you," she said, and the words brought reassurance to her husband's ruffled feelings.

"Well, don't talk about it any more, then," he said, kissing her. "And don't worry your little head with budgets and things. You'll get grey hairs and wrinkles, and I want my wife to stay young and pretty."

She followed him out into the hall and helped him put on his light overcoat. Then she went

into the living-room and watched him go down the walk and turn up the street, hurrying to get the eight-thirty-three. At the corner Dean turned and waved his hand and Elizabeth waved back at him. That was what she had been waiting for.

As soon as he was out of sight she turned away from the window, and as she did so she saw herself in the big fireplace mirror.

"Oh, yes," she said, disgustedly, to the image confronting her, "if you were tall and had straight hair and stern grey eyes and a commanding presence, your husband wouldn't think it was funny because you wanted to run your house on an allowance. But being little and curly-headed and having round, silly-looking baby-blue eyes, you're a joke. All the same, I'm right. I feel like a dependent, and an incompetent dependent at that, and no man has a right to make his wife feel that way. I don't care what his mother did. I'll bet she hated never having a penny to call her own. I didn't tell him that I haven't even got tram-fare in my purse—I wonder how he'd like it if he had to go about like that? And I won't do those nasty sneaking things I've heard of women doing—getting things charged and then arranging with the shop to take them back and give the cash and letting the bill go to their husbands, as usual. Or telling the dressmaker to raise her bill over the real price, and getting the difference in money. I won't do those things if I never have a penny. But I can't ask for money. Every time it's been harder and harder and harder, and now it sticks in my throat so that I can't. And yet—what am I going to do? It isn't that Dean's really selfish or tight-fisted. But he's old-fashioned and set, and he never seems to realize that I must buy stamps and shoe-laces and cold cream and all sorts of little bits of things. He never offers me any money, and he gives it to me as if he wondered what I could possibly want it for. Oh, it's unendurable! It humiliates me till it hurts. Well, you've got to do something about it, my dear," she concluded, with a final decided nod at her reflection.

Yes—but what? If this had been the first of her pleas for an allowance, if this had been the first time that she had been dismissed with loving ridicule, with compliments and kisses, she might not have felt quite so determined. But it was not. Very soon after their honeymoon, now a matter of two years past, Elizabeth, getting her house in running order, had suggested that a definite sum put in the bank for her each month would simplify matters tremendously for her. She even went so far as to make a neat, hard-thought-out little list of the amounts which she thought she would need for butcher, grocer, gasman, milkman, and all the rest of the items that every housekeeper knows by heart. She had added a small sum for pin-money. And Dean had simply shouted at it, and told her to go ahead and charge everything, and he would pay all the bills, so that "she wouldn't have a bit of trouble and worry in her dear little head." He didn't notice the pin-money item at all.

Elizabeth, thinking Dean the most wonderful, kind, and clever being alive, promptly surrendered. But as time went on and Dean became less of a domestic demigod and more of a fallible mortal, Elizabeth had regretted that surrender passionately. She felt that if she had stuck it out then Dean would have given in, and her lack of a bit of ready cash at certain moments was terribly exasperating. Being proud and over-sensitive, she had magnified her natural dislike of asking for money, until now it had become, as she told herself, impossible.

She gave an impatient sigh at this point in her musings, and with an effort pushed the distasteful subject away from her. There were so many things to be done. She hurried out to the kitchen, looked into the ice-box, gave orders for luncheon and dinner to the maid, suggested a change in the morning's work programme, and then went on upstairs to arrange her bedroom and do some needed mending. As she settled herself in her low sewing-chair she sat facing a picture of Dean. She glanced up at it once or twice and then turned her chair abruptly about, feeling again in her finger-tips that wicked little impulse to give him that one good hard slap.

As soon as the mending was done, she put on her hat and coat and started to market. She did not hurry, for there was no advantage in going early. The suburban tradesmen did not get their fresh supplies until a little before noon. Her house, as she came downstairs, did not seem as charming and delightful to her as it usually did. She did not linger in the hall to admire the delicate carving of the console table, which was her latest acquisition. She did not even glance in at the living-room with its Chinese rug and smart blue chintz. She was feeling her pocket-book, and at the door she opened it and looked within. Two samples of pink crêpe de Chine, a tradesman's card, a half-crown and seventeen pence in change were its table of contents. Elizabeth snapped to the clasp viciously. Those coppers were the last straw—absolutely the last.

On her way to the market she glanced at a recently-opened fruit shop, which reminded her that on her market list she had oranges for dessert, cooking apples, and breakfast fruit. She stopped a moment, looking at the price marks over the fruit, but a large sign just above the coloured heaps drove her swiftly onward. It read: "Strictly Cash."

Elizabeth made some rapid calculations. If she paid her grocer the usual prices for such fruit, she might have saved a shilling by dealing with the cash price. This discovery added fuel to her heated state of mind, for she was naturally thrifty.

In the market she was presently hailed by a neighbour, large, jolly Mrs. Merchauser.

"Oh, my dear," said Mrs. Merchauser, "I want to introduce my cousin, Miss Harvey." The lady with Mrs. Merchauser, a severe spinster, bowed and looked approvingly at pretty little Mrs. Teller's smart grey coat and soft black hat with the blue wing that matched her eyes.

"My cousin's a lecturer," babbled on Mrs. Merchauser, "and I've been telling her of the

work the Woman's Club has been doing about the milk supply, and she's had the most wonderful idea——" She paused and looked expectantly at Miss Harvey.

That lady promptly took her cue. "I was saying," she began, in something of a platform manner, "that a little publicity will probably have a great deal more effect than personal protests to the dairymen. What I suggest is some letters to your local paper, and some ringing leading articles, giving accurate facts and the dairymen's names who won't clean their barns. I have always found that a little publicity is one of the most powerful weapons to correct any abuse——" Her voice went on and on and on, but Elizabeth Teller did not hear. She had been hypnotized by the first suggestion.

A little publicity! A little publicity! Here was a thought that fitted her own particular need. A powerful weapon—ah, that was what she needed. She heard also "a mighty force" and "can easily be shamed into doing what is right," and—and—she fixed her ingenuous eyes on Miss Harvey's somewhat withered countenance, and as that lady concluded her remarks with a well-rounded period, in which the phrase "a little publicity" was again repeated, Elizabeth grasped her hand.

"I can't tell you how glad I am to meet you," she said, warmly. "Mrs. Merchauser must bring you over to have tea with me. I want to hear more—more about—about your work."

Miss Harvey beamed as the little woman moved on. "Some of the most childlike faces often conceal great force of character and real intellect," she remarked, sententiously.

"She's a real sweet girl, Mrs. Teller," agreed Mrs. Merchauser, "and got plenty of sense, as you say, though she does look like a kitten. She certainly did take to you, Charlotte."

Meanwhile the object of their conversation was giving her orders without so much as looking to see if the lettuce was fresh, or asking if beans cost more than brussels sprouts. She wanted to get through with this errand as soon as possible and get home, and think—and plan. As Miss Harvey had so feelingly remarked, her childlike face concealed great force of character and real intellect. It also concealed at this moment a firm resolve to put this allowance business through with no temporizing and no softening of method. If a little publicity would make a dairyman clean his barn and take care of his cows, Elizabeth, who knew from experience in the Woman's Club that a bad dairyman is the most difficult of all human beings to coerce save by law, felt sure that Dean might easily be handled. And she had reached a pitch of exasperation that cleared her brain and suggested an infinite number of ways to apply Miss Harvey's method.

There was only one possible hitch—perhaps Dean would not mind people knowing that he never gave her any money! Perhaps his system of home finance was so cherished by him that public opinion mattered not at all to him. But she felt, intuitively, that such was not the case. She felt that if this one little mean streak of his were blazoned abroad, he would see it as it really was and not artfully camouflaged by high-sounding statements that all he had was hers, and that her dependence on him was his greatest happiness. With the most affectionate thoughts for Dean, Elizabeth could not quite swallow that—not with only half a crown and seventeen pence to her name. Well—very soon she should see what she should see. She was going to act at once.

On entering his house that evening (letting himself in with a latchkey) Dean Teller was disappointed that his wife was not there to greet him. Usually she watched for his coming and opened the door for him. But he realized the reason for her apparent neglect, for he could hear her talking over the telephone. Her soft, clear voice drifted out to him plainly.

"I'm awfully sorry," she was saying, "but you see, Mrs. Sloane, I haven't a farthing of money to give. I haven't any allowance of my own. Mr. Teller thinks it's better to charge everything and let him pay the bills. But I could make a chocolate cake—two of them if you could use them, and whatever they would bring at the sale could be given. . . . What? . . . Oh, I see; I thought you were on the cake committee. You only want cash contributions. I'd love to give; but you see just how it is, don't you? . . . What? . . . Oh," with a little laugh, "Mr. Teller's old-fashioned; he likes things done the way his father and mother did. I'll try to make up for not giving any money by giving some extra things for the stalls. Good-bye."

There was not a trace of embarrassment or humiliation in the voice in which she made the explanation, but somehow Dean Teller was not pleased. He looked glum as his wife came running from the back hall to meet him.

"Oh, Dean, dear," she exclaimed, "I'm so sorry I wasn't here to let you in, but Mrs. Sloane called up just as you turned the street corner. She's collecting money for the Red Cross."

"Was it Mrs. Hilary Sloane?" asked Dean Teller, in an irritated voice. "What in the world made you tell her that you hadn't any money? She'll spread it all over town that I'm a regular old Scrooge. She's an awful talker. Here—here's a pound."

He had been digging into his pockets and had brought out several notes and a jingling handful of change. Elizabeth seized his offering delightedly.

"Oh, you old darling!" she cried. "That's fine!" And before he could gainsay her, she had tripped back to the telephone.

"Borough 178," he heard her call. "Halloa! . . . May I speak to Mrs. Sloane? . . . Oh, Mrs. Sloane, Dean has just come in and given me a pound, and I'll send it over to you for the collection. . . . Yes, wasn't it lucky? . . . He heard me telling you I hadn't any money. . . . Oh, no, I wouldn't think of keeping part of it; I know he wants to give it all. . . . Yes; I'll see you at the meeting to-morrow. . . . Good-bye."

Back she came, her face beaming. But somehow the glum look persisted on Dean. "Betsy,

dear," he began, in a patiently annoyed voice, "was it necessary to make it appear that I treat you like a child? Why did you say that pound came from me? Why didn't you tell her—— Oh, well."

"But, Dean," protested his little wife, her happiness dashed, "I just told the truth. What's the difference?"

This ingenuous comment checked any further protest. Mr. Teller stalked moodily into the living-room and laid down his evening papers. "I hope dinner's ready soon," he said, darkly. "I'm hungry as a wolf."

Seated opposite him at the table, Elizabeth wondered if he remembered that by giving away all the pound to Mrs. Sloane she had again rendered herself penniless. Evidently he did not. He said nothing about it. But he was quiet and thoughtful all the evening. Regarding him, his wife hoped fervently that Miss Harvey had been right in her statement about "a little publicity."

The hateful subject of money did not come up again for several days. Life flowed on in its usual way, and there was apparently not a cloud upon their marital horizon. But Mrs. Teller did not forget. She was preparing herself to administer shock Number Two.

"Vera's here to dinner to-night," she announced brightly when she opened the door for her husband on an evening some few days after the Sloane conversation.

"Oh, fine!" exclaimed Mr. Teller. He was very fond of his sister-in-law, Vera, Mrs. Allston—Elizabeth's only sister, and so diverse in type that one wondered how they happened to be born into the same family.

Vera herself came breezily forward from the living-room. She was dark and vivid and her big eyes snapped with energy. "Halloa, Zouzou!" she called out gaily, such being her irreverent nickname for the head of the Teller family. "How are you?"

"Never better," said Mr. Teller. "How's Theodore? Why didn't he come with you?"

"Oh, he doesn't love me any more," declared Vera. "He's gone to an old banquet to-night, so I thought I'd come out and see you two old stick-in-the-muds.

"And that reminds me," she went on, turning abruptly to Elizabeth, "I'm going to give you the talking-to of your life for being so extravagant. Believe me or not, Zouzou, but I called her up this morning and asked her to come in for a *matinée* and then I'd come out with her for dinner, and this preposterous young woman said that she hadn't enough money to pay her tram-fare to town! What have you two been living on—caviare and truffles? I can always manage to steal a little from the housekeeping money when I'm broke; but to be absolutely reduced like that—well, I suspect her of buying diamonds and a motor-car on the instalment plan."

"Oh, no, Vera," said Elizabeth, laughing with perfect naturalness; "you see, I haven't any housekeeping money. Dean pays all the bills and I charge everything. And I neglected to ask him for any pin-money and my season ticket had run out, and so I simply couldn't come."

"For mercy's sake—doesn't Dean give you an allowance?" demanded Vera, point-blank.

"I don't believe in them," said Dean, stiffly. "Elizabeth knows she has only to ask and I'll gladly give her all she wants. I'm awfully sorry you missed the *matinée*, dear."

"Oh, you mediæval creature," cried Vera, jocosely, "making your own wife ask for money as if she were a beggar. What a joke! I can hardly wait until I see Theodore to tell him! Oh, what a good story this will make—Elizabeth can't go to a *matinée* because she has forgotten to ask her husband for money!" She burst into hilarious laughter.

Dean Teller looked at her, and wondered why it was he had always thought her such a nice girl. She was evidently lacking in the very fundamentals of sense and sensibility. "I hope you won't make a story of it and tell the family," he said. "I see nothing funny about it. It's a disagreeable little *contretemps*, to my mind."

"It must be a lot more disagreeable to Bet's mind," said Vera, still facetious. "How does she ask you for money? Does she say, 'Please, Dean, may I have sixpence to go to the movies?' or 'a penny for a stamp?'" She broke again into laughter at the very idea, and Elizabeth joined her merriment.

All through the evening Vera made joking allusions to the Teller family's mode of finance, and Dean was thankful when she decided to take the eight-fifty-seven instead of the nine-twenty-two. He had never enjoyed an evening with Vera less. He was so absorbed in his resentment of her ridicule of himself (as he thought it) that he did not remember his wife was still penniless.

But the crowning touch was on Sunday morning, when he was sitting straight and attentive, listening with keen appreciation to the Reverend Albert Henry Severance, the eloquent rector of All Saints'. An appeal was being made to the congregation for an especially generous collection for a certain relief work in France in which the Reverend Severance was deeply interested. He made it their plain duty to give; and give freely, to give not only according to their means, but as far beyond them as possible. Dean Teller was touched, and responsive.

He felt in his pocket for his note-case and took out a crisp note. The collection basket, propelled by sharp-eyed Dick Townsend, was approaching—Dick Townsend, whose favourite topic of conversation was exactly how much or how little the various parishioners of All Saints' put into his basket. Dean laid his note in the basket, folded to be sure, but with the figure plainly visible. Dick held the basket before Elizabeth, and before Dean's agonized gaze there dripped from her gloved fingers two pennies—right beside his glorious new note. There was no mistaking what Mrs. Dean Teller's contribution was—and Dean thought Dick Townsend gave him a malicious twinkle as he passed on.

"BEFORE DEAN'S AGONIZED GAZE THERE DRIPPED FROM HER GLOVED FINGERS TWO PENNIES—RIGHT BESIDE HIS GLORIOUS NEW NOTE."

"Why, Elizabeth," he began in an agonized voice, as soon as they were on their way home, "why did you put two pennies in the offertory? I never was so mortified in all my life. Dick Townsend will tell it all over town that I never give you any money of your own."

Elizabeth's sweet, childlike eyes met his wonderingly. "I'm so sorry, dear," she said, with complete amiability, "but, after all, *you don't.*"

She did not wait for him to reply, but turned and gaily greeted Mrs. Merchauser and Miss Harvey. The former asked a question:—

"What do you suppose amused Dick Townsend so when he was taking the collection? Just after he passed your pew I noticed how he looked—I thought he was going to burst out laughing. I really think he's too undignified for a vestryman—don't you?"

"Certainly I do," said Dean Teller, firmly. He had a mental picture of Dick Townsend and his intimates chuckling over this delicious bit. His soul writhed.

The next day, when he returned from business and he was let into his home by his pretty, devoted wife, Dean Teller, before he even took off his hat and coat, handed her a packet. "I've opened an account at the bank in your name," he said, "and I'll pay forty pounds into it the first of each month. I really can't keep on taking my secretary's time to make out so many little personal cheques for me, and I thought you could take care of the house bills out of this money, and your own expenses too. Of course, I'll pay for the coal, or any big special thing. This is just for running expenses, and your clothes and pin-money. Here's your bank-book and a cheque-book. Do you think forty will be enough?"

Mrs. Teller threw her arms around his neck. "Oh, you angel, Dean!" she cried. "It's plenty—more than I need. What a darling you were to think of it! I'll be so careful—and—and will you show me just how to make out a cheque, and everything?"

Mr. Teller softened. What a dear, feminine little creature she was, how innocent, how sweet and appreciative! "Yes, indeed, dear," he said. "You'll soon learn—you're a clever little thing."

He advanced into the living-room with his evening papers. Mrs. Teller followed him, all smiles. Was it imagination, or did she really give a droll, confidential wink to the pretty little woman in the mantel mirror and murmur something about "a little publicity"?

"What did you say, dear?" asked Mr. Teller.

"Nothing," said Elizabeth, holding tight to her bank-book, and looking more like a round-eyed kitten than ever.

Corporal's Guard.

By W. PETT RIDGE.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

CORPORAL RICHARD BENSON entered the household at 19, Wallingford Road, N., in such a quiet, unobtrusive way that Mr. and Mrs. Munday—who had no objection to the billeting of soldiers in general, but considered it should be done at other peoples' houses—were disarmed at the very start. Benson came originally, it appeared, from a village in Essex; Mrs. Munday was a native of a village in Suffolk. At the first supper they exchanged remarks in dialect.

"'Pon my word," cried Mr. Munday, slapping the table joyously, "if this don't take me back to the time, old gal, when I met you first, and before I learnt you to speak proper!"

Corporal Benson, after the meal, had a game of cribbage with the host, and at the end the pegs on the board showed that Mr. Munday was the winner. The tenants of No. 19 agreed privately that war, a terrible enough affair in itself, was not altogether without compensations.

Not until the Saturday evening was any allusion made to the three daughters of the family. The morrow happened to be one of the few days chosen by them for visits to Wallingford Road, and Mrs. Munday threw out hints to Corporal Benson that his presence would not be urgently required.

"It's your one day you've got almost free," she suggested, "and now's your time to have a good look around London. I'll pack some sandwiches for you; you be off by half-past twelve, and we sha'n't expect to see nothing of you till nine o'clock in the evening."

"I don't want to go and get lost," he remarked.

"Nonsense!" declared Mrs. Munday. "I can tell you all about the motor-buses you've got to take. And I'll map out the day for you from start to finish." She added, later, that the girls had always opposed the idea of a lodger being taken at No. 19, contending that if this were done news would be sure to come to the ears of some of the young ladies in the establishments to which they respectively belonged.

On the Sunday, as Corporal Benson was preparing to go, rain started. Mr. Munday had not returned from chapel; Mrs. Munday was engaged in the kitchen, and her fear was that the girls, tempted by the fineness of the morning, might have travelled with no umbrellas. Benson volunteered his services.

"Let me have all the gamps there are in the house," he said. And went along, carrying these, to the main road and waited for arrival of tramcars. He spoke with deference to more than one young woman, and accepted rebuffs; eventually he found three tall girls taking cover in the doorway of a draper's shop and bewailing loudly the misfortune that no taxis were to be found. Them he with trepidation addressed; they introduced themselves and accepted, with gratitude, the umbrellas. "This," they declared, "is real thoughtfulness. Not many would have done as much."

At Wallingford Road, when he was about to take his parcel of food and go, the young ladies

placed a veto on his departure. "Look at the weather!" they urged. "Not fit to turn a dog out; much less a gentleman." To their mother's whispered reminder, they answered that a billeted resident was very different from a paying civilian guest. So Corporal Benson sat at the meal with the rest, and listened whilst the visitors talked rapidly and unceasingly; and when, now and again, they invited his opinions on the war, he said, in a guarded way, that it might perhaps last until the end of the year; on the other hand, it might not. It was, it seemed, the mother's birthday, and after dinner presents were set out, and the Corporal's criticisms appealed for, and he said he considered them very nice indeed, reflecting credit on the givers, and furnishing gratification, he was sure, to the recipient.

"He's waking up!" commented the tall young ladies, aside.

When Mr. Munday had made an offer to take Corporal Benson to a Brotherhood meeting, and the Corporal had excused himself on the grounds that he was, if anything, Church of England, the talk became more friendly, and Margaret, the youngest, gave news of two ladies in her firm who had become engaged to military gentlemen; and Barbara, the next, referred to a dear friend of hers who had married unexpectedly and with miraculous speed a gentleman connected with the Navy, while Katherine, the eldest, spoke, with a proper reserve, of an acquaintance who had hopes of engaging the affections of a lieutenant in the Sherwood Foresters. This was conceded to be a high aspiration, and one not likely to be achieved.

"Everybody," sighed Katherine, "everybody, except us three."

"You mustn't lose heart," urged her mother, encouragingly.

"But isn't that just what they ought to do," asked Corporal Benson, "if they want to get married?"

This went remarkably well. Katherine was not quite sure that they ought to be discussing the question with a member of the opposite sex, but admitted the topic was interesting; she found that the girls who, in these days of large wages, talked in an offhand manner about marriages, and frequently announced their resolve to keep single and preserve independence—why, these were often the very ones who slipped off on the quiet to a registrar's office, and appeared the next day wearing a plain gold ring.

The weather brightened after tea, and Corporal Benson accompanied the entire party to Waterlow Park, where the gravelled walks were dry, the flowers cheerful, the company select. Benson, improving in agility of speech, came out remarkably strong on shrubs and trees; Margaret, the youngest, declared that listening to him was nearly as good as reading a book. Later they did come to the question of books, and the soldier took his part in the discussion. Katherine Munday, hitherto an authority on literature, and possessing a steady record of one novel a week, had to admit that whilst she scored in regard to modern writers, Corporal Benson had a greater acquaintance with standard works.

"Please excuse me," she said, "for asking a straight question, but what were you, exactly, before you joined the Army?"

He answered that he had been engaged in a school.

"HE FOUND THREE TALL GIRLS TAKING COVER IN THE DOORWAY OF A DRAPER'S SHOP AND BEWAILING LOUDLY THE MISFORTUNE THAT NO TAXIS WERE TO BE FOUND."

"Ah!" she remarked, "that accounts for it."

"Any other engagement?" inquired Margaret, pertly.

He drew a breath before answering.

"No," he said.

It can be remarked here that Corporal Benson, in answering thus, spoke more truly than he knew. At the moment (so he told me afterwards) his intention in making the curt statement was, first, to retain an attitude of freedom in the presence of three amiable young women; second, to save himself the trouble of answering further questions. It is not for me to say whether these grounds constitute a good and sufficient excuse. What happened was—and he recognized it at once as a form of punishment for incorrectness in speech—that on the following morning, as he was giving compliments at breakfast to Mr. and Mrs. Munday on the attractiveness of their daughters, a letter came by post. Mrs. Munday caught sight of the handwriting.

"Open it, Corporal," she directed. "Don't mind us."

"It's only a receipt," he said, blushing.

"Doesn't look much like a business communication. Have some more coffee."

He read the contents so soon as he had turned out of Wallingford Road. Miss Fairweather began with an apology for not answering his last five letters, but furnished no reason for her neglect. Instead she went on to argue that a soldier's life was a risky one in that he never knew where he was likely to be from one day to another; at a recent meeting at Highgate Cemetery with several of her relatives she had taken advantage of the opportunity to consult them. They were, it appeared, almost unanimous in agreeing that, in the new circumstances, she had justification for rearranging her procedure, and as she did not wish to act in opposition to their counsel she hoped Mr. Benson would kindly look upon the engagement as cancelled. And he was to pack up all her letters in a parcel and send it, registered, by an early post to her address.

"'IN DEALING WITH THE FAIR SEX,' INTERRUPTED THE SERGEANT, 'THE IMPORTANT MATTER IS TO TREAT 'EM WITH A LOFTY DISREGARD.'"

"Ought to add," said a postscript, "that poor Aunt Milly, of whom I have often spoken to you in the happy days that are no more, has left me house property that brings in just over two hundred pounds a year. I am thinking of sending in my resignation to the school authorities."

It has been hinted that Corporal Benson at first took the blow as one repaying him for the inaccuracy uttered in Waterlow Park. After morning drill he came to the conclusion that in taking this view he was accepting too much blame. At the end of an afternoon route march he decided that Miss Fairweather had behaved with great callousness, and that he, Corporal Benson, could reckon himself a person extremely ill-used by a lady acting under the influence of sudden riches. He consulted, before returning to Wallingford Road, a sergeant who had been married no less than twice.

"She's treating you shameful," declared the expert, "and I don't know that I ever heard of a worse case. Is she a fine figure of a gel?"

"Not tall, but very good-looking."

"My first was that sort. And, my word, she didn't half lord it over me! So when it came to marrying again I had the presence of mind to select one not so attractive in features."

"And she proves different, I suppose?"

"No," replied the sergeant. "She carries on much the same as the first one did. But leaving my own troubles and coming back to yours, allow me to strongly recommend you on no account to do as she suggests. Keep her letters. Keep a tight hold of 'em. That'll make her feel that there's a sword of What's-his-name a-hanging over her head. Meanwhile put her out of your thoughts."

During the week Corporal Benson, whilst complying with one part of the advice, discovered it impossible to obey it in its entirety. The more he tried to forget Miss Fairweather the more she insisted on coming into his memory. Duets which they had sung together at alfresco concerts hummed in his brain; the compliments they shared there he could repeat word for word. He thought of the walks they enjoyed, their friendly arguments over our educational system; especially he remembered the occasion when she said:—

"Dick, you're a nice boy, and I love you!"

A peremptory communication arrived on the Friday. Miss Fairweather was surprised that

Mr. Benson had not shown ordinary good manners in returning the documents; she now enclosed a large envelope, which she hoped would be found sufficiently stamped. Unless her request were attended to, unless the letters reached her by Saturday evening, an uncle who happened to be in a Covent Garden Market firm would give her legal advice on the next step to be taken.

"My lad," said the helpful sergeant, "hold yourself cool and self-composed. Do nothing. Let your policy be one of what we term masterly inactivity."

"I don't like to behave as though——"

"In dealing with the fair sex," interrupted the sergeant, "the important matter is to treat 'em with a lofty disregard." The sergeant's wife appeared at the moment with instructions that he should accompany her on the business of marketing. He had no opportunity for offering further advice.

Mr. and Mrs. Munday commented privately and humorously on the fact that the three daughters announced their intention of again coming to Wallingford Road on the Sunday; two calls in swift succession were rare, and the parents had no doubts regarding the cause. Mrs. Munday thought Margaret, the youngest, had the great chance; her husband was not a betting-man, but if he had been, would have put his money on Katherine. There remained Barbara, who could not be considered as entirely out of the running.

Sunday proved fine, and when Mrs. Munday suggested that the Corporal should nevertheless walk along and meet the young ladies he pleaded that he had correspondence which required looking through and demanded consideration. Before coming down to the midday meal he had read all the old letters, and, with a sigh, he placed them in the large envelope. The afternoon went quietly until the girls' father left for his Brotherhood meeting, and then the pianoforte was opened. Margaret and Corporal Benson were singing "Oh that we two were maying!" when a ring came at the front door. Mrs. Munday answered the ring; in her hospitable way, she begged Miss Fairweather to come in.

Benson escorted the visitor, when tea was over, to the railway station. In the hall, as the Munday girls offered to help him with his overcoat, Miss Fairweather, short though she was, had taken charge of the duty.

"What are those papers bulging out of your pocket, Dick, dear?" she asked, as they went along. He tried to extract the envelope, but this proved difficult. "Oh, I remember," said Miss Fairweather. "Those were what I called for. But just you keep them, will you? Seeing other people making a fuss over you has made me see that I was right, and that my aunts and uncles were altogether and absolutely wrong!"

"HE TRIED TO EXTRACT THE ENVELOPE, BUT THIS PROVED DIFFICULT."

The BATTLE OF ARRAS

The Greatest British Victory in Three Years.

BY

A. CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER I.

A German Miscalculation—The Advance of Snow's Seventh Corps—Advance of Haldane's Sixth Corps—The Advance of Fergusson's Seventeenth Corps—Advance of Byng's Canadian Corps—The Results of the Battle—The Aftermath of the Battle—A Great Fight.

WHILST the German line was falling back to its new positions, and the Allies were eagerly following it across the ravished countryside until the increased resistance and the familiar lines of barbed wire warned them that the immediate retreat had come to an end, Sir Douglas Haig had managed without relaxing his pursuit to collect a strong striking force at the point of junction between the new German line and the old. The blow which he contemplated was no small local advance, but was a very wide movement extending from the neighbourhood of Lens in the north to Arras in the south, a front of more than twelve miles. Upon this sector a tremendous concentration of artillery had been effected, and four corps were waiting the signal for the assault, the three southern ones forming Allenby's Third Army, while the fourth or northern one was the right-hand corps of Horne's First Army. The southern corps were the Seventh (Snow), which operated to the south of Arras, having Croisilles for its southern boundary; the Sixth (Haldane), which advanced due east from Arras, with the Scarpe for its northern boundary; the Seventeenth (Fergusson), which had its right on the Scarpe and its left on Thelus, with its front facing the three spurs which form this end of the Vimy Ridge; and, finally, the Canadian Corps (Byng), which faced this long and sinister slope, the scene of so much bloodshed in the past. Each corps was marshalled with three divisions in front and one in reserve, so that there were roughly one hundred and twenty thousand men in the storming line, with forty thousand advancing behind them. The Eighteenth Corps (Maxse) was in reserve in the rear of the Third Army, while the Thirteenth Corps (McCracken) was behind the First Army. The Germans had six divisions, the Eleventh Prussian, Fourteenth Bavarian, First Bavarian Reserve, and the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Seventy-ninth Reserve in the line. Their guns also were numerous, as subsequent captures were to prove; but it is probable that an extension of the Hindenburg retreat was in contemplation, and that some of the heavy artillery was already on the move.

A GERMAN MISCALCULATION.

The German strategists had imagined that by withdrawing their troops over a long front they would throw out of gear all the preparations of the Allies for their spring offensive. What they

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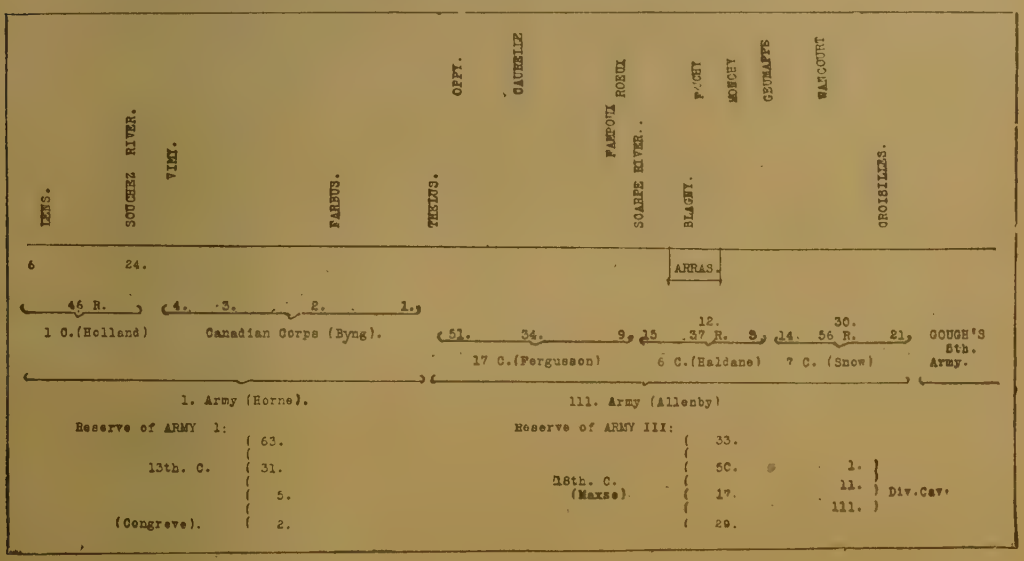
did actually do was to save their force in the Gommecourt peninsula from being cut off, which would surely have been their fate had they waited. But in the larger issue they proved to be singularly ill-informed, for they had stayed their retreat at the very points of the line on which the offensive had been prepared, so that the plans of attack were neither modified nor delayed. That this is true is evident, since such tremendous blows as Arras in the north and Rheims in the south could not possibly have been delivered had the preparations only begun after the Hindenburg retreat.

One of the most difficult problems of this attack was how to arrange it upon that section which was covered by the town of Arras. It is true that the German line was one thousand seven hundred yards east of the market-place; but the suburbs extended right up to it, and it was fringed with houses. The town itself, in which the storming troops must assemble and through which all supports and supplies must pass, was full of narrow streets within easy range of the German guns, and previous French guns. That last blue line so far forward upon the map has been the cause of many a rebuff.

The British bombardment, which came in gusts during the days preceding the attack, did enormous damage to the German defences. The evidence of prisoners showed that for several days they had been reduced to their emergency rations. The wire, which in places was a hundred yards thick, was mostly destroyed in the first line, and greatly damaged in the second, though in the third it was found to be largely intact, save upon the left of the line. The space between the first and second German lines was roughly five hundred yards. Between the second and third was about three thousand. On April 8th there was a severe gas bombardment from four-inch trench mortars. Finally, in the early morning of April 9th, came the fearful whirlwind of fire, which was the prelude to the attack. Some idea of its intensity may be gathered from the fact that the number of guns was so great that they could have rubbed wheels from end to end of the line had they been so placed. At five-thirty the word was



ORDER OF BATTLE—ARRAS, APRIL 9, 1917.

experience had proved that each exit was so carefully and accurately barraged by the German fire that it was most difficult for the troops to debouch from it. The extreme difficulties caused by the formidable defensive preparations of the enemy were fully realized, but everything which human forethought could suggest had been done to meet them. Above all, two great lessons taught by the Somme experience had been thoroughly assimilated: the one, that the broader the attack the more successful it is likely to be, as it prevents a concentration of the German guns upon a single area; the other, that it is wiser, even in the heat of battle and the glow of victory, to limit your objective to an area which is well within the range of your given, and in the first dim grey of a rainy, windy, and sleety morning, the infantry dashed forward to the attack—"wave after wave of grimy, mud-covered, determined men, with hearts of steel and as light as feathers," to use the words of one of them. The events may best be described from the south of the line as being the nearest to Arras from which the battle derives its name.

THE ADVANCE OF SNOW'S SEVENTH CORPS.

Snow's Seventh Corps had the Twenty-first North Country Division upon the extreme right, the Thirtieth Lancashire Division in the centre, the Fifty-sixth London on their left, and the Fourteenth Light Division upon the extreme

northern wing. The soldiers, soaked to the skin, with the rain beating upon their backs, and their feet ankle-deep in the mud, set about their task in a slow, calm, businesslike fashion which would take no denial. No village or notable fixed points lay in their path, but they plodded without a check or halt over the first entrenchments, finding no very strong resistance, save at one point upon the left of their line, and suffering little loss from the German artillery. Considerable numbers of the enemy were found scattered in their shattered trenches or covering in the dug-outs. Over a thousand of these were sent to the rear.

Taking them in turn from the south we shall just follow the fortunes of the North countrymen of the Twenty-first Division. This division upon this day was not expected to do more than make a strong demonstration, because both it and to a less extent the division upon its left, had in front of it sheets of uncut wire and all the devilries of the fixed German line. The object, therefore, was that they should make a holding attack, in the hope that the northern divisions of the corps should get well forward to the east, and then swing to the south in such a way as to make the German position untenable. This was eventually done, and a way was cleared so that the two divisions in the south should be able to advance with the remainder of the line. The whole operation of the Seventh Corps has to be continually judged by the fact that they were on the edge of the abandoned area, and that therefore their southern front bulged out to the east in a way which brought the successive divisions almost into an echelon formation.

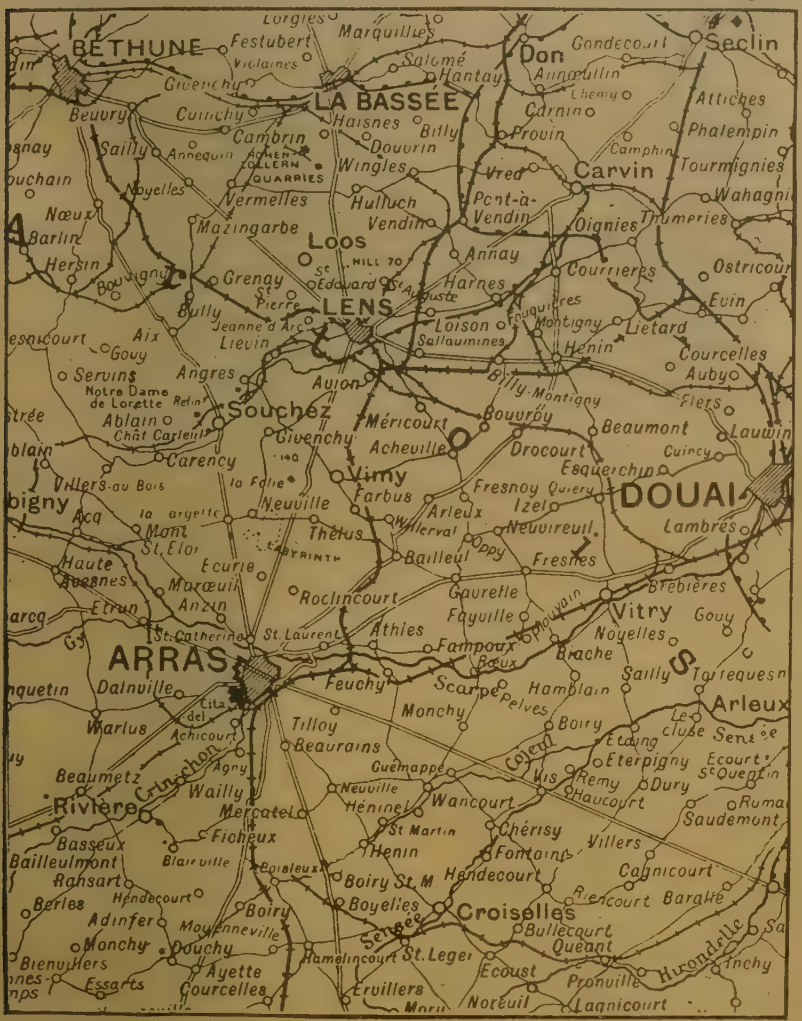
On the left of the Twenty-first Division were the Lancashire Pals of the Thirtieth Division. Upon April 8th they had made a good start, as the 2nd Bedfords carried the village of St. Martin-de-Cojeul, an outlying point of the German line, but on the same date the 21st Brigade was held up in an attempt to advance upon the left. On the 9th, the day of battle, they went forward again, the 21st on the left, the 89th Brigade on the right. The first dash behind a splendid barrage was most promising, but the 21st Brigade ran into uncut sheets of wire and was held, the 18th King's Liverpools suffering severely. The brigade upon the right managed to get forward, but it also was faced eventually with the same obstacle. The attack was renewed two days later with the aid of four Tanks, but the wire was still impassable, though the infantry tried again and again. Finally, however, the Fifty-sixth Division having cleared its own front, sent the Victoria Rifles bombing down the front of the Thirtieth Division, who, having surmounted their own obstacles, cleared in turn the front of the Twenty-first Division upon the right, and so by the evening of April 11th the line was finally advanced.

To the Fifty-sixth Division, the next upon the north, was assigned the capture of Neuville Vitasse and the strong works which surrounded it. The advance was carried out at seven-forty-five—the zero time was earlier as it travelled up the line—and was led by the 167th Brigade upon the right and by the 168th Brigade upon the left, while the 169th were in support. "The bombardment and the covering fire were magnificent," says one who marched in the ranks. "I almost felt sorry for the poor old Hun, only, after all, he is such a Hun." The main fighting was on the right, where the 3rd London and 8th Middlesex stormed the main portion of the village. At ten-thirty all the eastern portion had been secured, and the 1st London moved forward to take the Cojeul Switch line. Unfortunately, they struck up against uncut wire, and a very heavy belt of fire. Colonel Smith, the commanding officer, and the great majority of the other officers were killed or wounded, and the advance was brought to a stand. The 18th Liverpools, of the 21st Brigade, upon the right had also been halted by the uncut wire. The Colonel of the 7th Middlesex took local command of this difficult situation so far as it affected the advance of his brigade, and threw his battalion in to strengthen the 1st Londons, so that together they captured the Cojeul Switch trench. The Londoners were then well ahead of the Liverpool men upon their right, so the 1st London threw back a defensive flank while the 7th Middlesex stormed forward against the powerful Ibex trench. Three separate attempts were made, much impeded by the deep mud, and all ending in failure, so that darkness fell before the task had been accomplished, but with true British tenacity, at 3 a.m., in the darkest hour before dawn, the Middlesex men tried once more and carried Ibex, taking a number of prisoners. The 168th Brigade had with varying fortunes kept pace upon the left, and in the early morning the London Scottish on its right were in touch with Ibex trench.

The position of the 167th was still dangerous upon the flank, as it was always ahead of its southern neighbours, so that instead of advancing eastwards the London Scottish now turned south, their depleted ranks being strengthened by the 9th London (Victorias) from the reserve brigade. The enemy were only forty yards off upon the flank, with a perfect warren of trenches, and the mud was so dreadful that some men who got in could hardly be dragged out again alive. In spite of every difficulty the Londoners, after an initial check, swept triumphantly down Ibex and Zoo trenches, clearing in one wild, glorious rush the whole position, capturing one hundred and ninety-seven more prisoners of the 31st Prussian Regiment, with several machine-guns. Captain Cousens, who led this charge, after being badly wounded, was unhappily killed by a sniper in the moment of victory. The Victorias joined in the victorious charge and helped to hold and to extend what had been won. The general effect of the advance of this division was to turn the flank of the southern German defences and to open up a road for the Thirtieth and Twenty-first Divisions upon the right.

The Fourteenth Light Division, to the north of the Londoners, was faced by the slight slope and formidable defences of Telegraph Hill. They went forward with the 42nd Brigade upon the left and the 43rd upon the right. Their

performance during the day was a particularly fine one, and they not only rushed the strong position of Telegraph Hill, but they carried the British line to a point well to the east of it. Their whole advance was largely regulated by the situation upon their northern flank, and they were exposed to such an enfilade fire whenever they got at all ahead that they found it impossible to act entirely upon their own.



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SCENE OF THE OPERATIONS DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT INSTALMENT.

Upon the left of the front was a strong German position, called "The Harp," which was very gallantly carried by the 42nd Brigade. Sixteen Tanks which were to have lent a hand in this difficult operation failed for some reason to arrive in time, and the infantry had to advance with no help save their own stout hearts. The attack was carried out by the 9th K.R.R., with the 4th Royal Fusiliers of the Third Division acting upon their left, and their comrades of the 5th Oxford and Bucks upon their right. Their only serious opponents here, as elsewhere, were snipers and machine-gunners; but these were all of the best, and caused heavy losses before the whole objective with its garrison had been captured. By a quarter past nine in the morning it was entirely in British hands, and as the day wore on the division kept steadily improving their position, though still short of their final objective, that elusive red line which is so easy to draw and so hard to attain. In the evening an attempt was made by the Fourteenth Division, still acting with the Sixth Corps upon the left, to struggle still farther eastwards. This advance had no success, and so the forward units of the whole Seventh Corps dug in on the general line from Feuchy Chapel road in the north to near Croiselles in the south, having after a desperate day's fighting achieved a gain which averaged two or three miles, and having taken a total of nearly two thousand prisoners with a number of guns. Concerning these prisoners it may be unsafe to generalize, but it is certain that many of them surrendered very readily. As to their general type, the opinion of a commanding officer who handled many of them may be quoted: "The officers were mild persons, none of the bullet-headed, bristly-moustached, truculent Prussian type. The prisoners generally do not inspire one with respect. Braggarts and bullies in prosperity, in adversity they cringe."

ADVANCE OF HALDANE'S SIXTH CORPS.

Haldane's Sixth Corps was to the immediate left of the Seventh, and its operations were directed due east of Arras. The three front divisions, counting from the south, were the Third Regulars, the Twelfth South of England, and the Fifteen Scottish, with the Thirty-seventh English in reserve.

The right of the attacking line was formed by the 76th Brigade of the Third Division, a unit which had distinguished itself greatly in previous fighting. The 8th and 9th Brigades were in close support. Its front was south of the Arras-Cambrai road. To the left of the 76th Brigade the line was carried on by the 37th and 36th Brigades of the Twelfth Division. Their right rested on the Arras—Cambrai road. To their left were the 44th and 45th of the Fifteenth Division. Their left rested upon the Scarpe. Nothing could have gone more smoothly than the advance, which kept well up with the barrage. Only at Observation Hill was vigorous resistance encountered, and the German barrage was so belated that it fell upon empty trenches after the stormers had left them. To the courage which had always been their birthright the infantry now added all the cool war-wisdom which experience of many battles must bring with it, and all those devices for overcoming the scattered forts of the enemy and avoiding their machine-guns which had been learned on the Somme and the Ancre were now practised to keep down the losses of the assault.

The advance of the 76th Brigade had been to the south of the great high road which leads from Arras to Cambrai. The 1st Gordons led the attack and took the front line with a number of the Prussian 38th Regiment. The 10th Welsh Fusiliers then passed through the ranks of the Highlanders and captured Devil's Wood. So swift were these movements that the German barrage was always in the rear. Having thus secured the first objective, the 9th Brigade, strengthened by the 2nd Suffolks, stormed forward to the next line of defence. The 4th Royal Fusiliers on the right took Nomeny, Spring, and Lynx trenches, when the Suffolks passed through them and took Neuilly trench. The 12th West Yorkshires took Tilloy village. The 13th Liverpool, after being held up on the left, carried the line forward, and by getting its machine-gun on to the roof of Tilloy Château dominated the country to the extreme discomfort of the German snipers. Besides these numerous trenches and strong points, the 9th Brigade captured a large German redoubt, an exploit in which they were much assisted by a couple of Tanks. Here a considerable number of prisoners were made, including most of a battalion of the 162nd Regiment, together with its commander.

It will save confusion if we follow the fortunes of each division for the day, regardless of what is going on upon its flank, as it is impossible to understand a narrative which switches continually from one portion of the line to another. The whole operation of the Sixth Corps was somewhat behind the time appointed, as each division had met with some delays, but the advance towards the third objective was begun about one o'clock in this southern area. The 8th Brigade had now taken up the running, and the 9th had fallen into support. Reinforced by the two reserve battalions of the 76th Brigade, the victorious advance was resumed, the 2nd Royal Scots and 7th Shropshires carrying the Bois des Bœufs to the south of the Cambrai road, together with five guns which had been concealed in it. To those who had experienced what the capture of a wood meant in the Somme fighting it was indeed a promise for the future that this considerable plantation should offer so slight a resistance. The 8th Brigade fought its way onwards for another mile or more until it had attained the line of Feuchy Chapel. Here the German resistance had thickened and the artillery fire had increased in the same ratio as that of the British had weakened. A halt was called, therefore, and the infantry consolidated their advanced position. An attempt by the Gordons and the 8th Royal Lancasters to reach the extreme final objective was checked in the evening by a very heavy fire upon both flanks.

In the centre the Twelfth Division had met with strong resistance at several points, which caused the assault to fall behind the barrage. These centres of German resistance were usually isolated houses or small redoubts, so that it was possible in many cases to mask them and to push onwards. No village or large fixed defence lay in their path, and in spite of a check for some time at the estaminet upon the Cambrai road, they were able to line up with their comrades to the south upon the second objective about half-past twelve o'clock. At this point the 35th Brigade passed through the advanced lines and moved to the front. A number of difficult positions were taken, including Observation Hill, and the ground was so thoroughly cleared that the assailants were able to go forward with the assurance that their wounds would not be in the back. It was found, however, as they neared the line of the third German position that considerable stretches of wire had been imperfectly cut, and that the machine-gun fire was so severe as to make the final assault impossible. The infantry dug in, therefore, and waited for further support from the guns, many of which were already on the move. The 9th Essex upon the right actually reached the Feuchy Chapel work and held their grip of it, keeping in line with the 8th Brigade upon the south.

The Fifteenth Division to the north of the corps' front had before them the very strong position called the "Railway Triangle," where the line to Lens branches away from the line to Douai. This formidable place was attacked by the Scotch infantry, and after a very severe struggle it was captured about half-past eleven, save for its eastern side, which was finally taken later in the morning, the artillery aiding the assailants by some extraordinarily good shooting. The advance was then resumed, and the division found itself shortly after noon in the line of the second objective. Six brigades of field artillery had followed closely upon the heels of the infantry, and managed, in spite of the unfavourable state of the ground, to take up a position to cover the further attack. When one recalls the dreadful weather and the shell-pocked state of the countryside, it was a remarkable feat upon the part of the gun-teams to get their pieces so rapidly forward. Several Tanks came forward also, and did good work, not only upon this front but at Tilloy.

The Fifteenth Division was now somewhat behind the others, but shortly after two o'clock the 46th Lowland Brigade advanced upon the third objective. These splendid soldiers brushed aside every obstacle, and when fired upon at short range by German guns they rushed onwards with a yell and captured the battery. By 4 p.m. they had fully reached their final line and had pushed out their patrols some hundreds of yards to the eastwards. This fine advance, which was the only one to reach the extreme limit upon this front, was carried out by the 7th Scots Borderers, 10th Scots Rifles, and 10-11th Highland Light Infantry.

The Thirty-seventh Division, composed entirely of English troops, north, south, and midland, had moved up in the rear of the fighting line, and in the middle of the afternoon it found itself in the German second-line system; while the corps' mounted troops had pushed forward on the heels of the Fifteenth Division as far as the Railway Triangle. As evening fell the Thirty-seventh Division pushed forward with the intention of reaching the extreme point attained by the Fifteenth Division, and then swinging to the right in the hope of capturing Monchy. The advance seems, however, to have taken a direction rather too much to the south, with the result that instead of finding the opening made by the 46th Brigade they came upon the more contracted Feuchy line, held by the Twelfth and Third Divisions. Here they were held up by a field of wire, as their comrades had already been, and the two brigades concerned—the 111th upon the left and the 112th upon the right—remained in line with the 35th and the 8th Brigades, the units being considerably intermingled. The 63rd Brigade, however, which was now a brigade of the Thirty-seventh Division, though the reader will associate it with the Twenty-first Division in the past, was able to keep its true direction, and before night had finally established itself at the north end of Orange Hill, well up to the third objective and in touch with the 46th Brigade. The corps cavalry also pushed forward along the south bank of the Scarpe, capturing three eight-inch howitzers upon the way, and halting opposite Fampoux, where they were in touch with the Fourth Division upon the northern bank of the river.

Such was the splendid day's work of Haldane's corps. It is true that in the south the uncut wire had made it impossible for him to reach his ultimate objective, but he had in the space of the one Easter day captured the villages of Feuchy and of Tilloy, gained some thirty-six square miles of ground, and taken two thousand prisoners with sixty guns. It was a most notable achievement. We shall now pause on the evening of this first day of battle and we shall go back to reconstruct the operations upon the northern bank of the Scarpe.

THE ADVANCE OF FERGUSSON'S SEVENTEENTH CORPS.

The Seventeenth Corps (Fergusson) was upon the left of the 6th. Its right-hand unit, the Ninth Division, consisting of two Scottish and one South African Brigade, was operating upon the immediate north of the Scarpe. This division was to attack with three brigades in line, the 26th on the right, 27th on the left, and South Africans between. Upon the left of the 9th was the Thirty-fourth Division, drawn largely from Scotland and Tyneside, the same fine division which had been the very pivot upon which the battle of July 1st had turned. Upon the left of the corps was the Fifty-first Highland Territorial Division, which had distinguished itself so greatly at Beaumont Hamel five months before. It may be said, therefore, that the fighting line of the Seventeenth Corps upon this great day was predominantly Scottish, but the veteran Fourth Division was in immediate support. There were no villages over the greater part of the front, but there were great numbers of fortified farms and strong posts of every description, besides the usual lines of wired trenches. The ground was in successive ridges, and a big tactical obstacle existed in the Lens–Arras Railroad in its alternate cuttings and embankments. The long, eager line of Highlanders, Tynesiders, and South Africans rolled over every obstacle, and by ten o'clock had mastered all its first objectives, which were the three lines of German trenches. In the south, the Ninth Division had carried first Blangy and then Athies by storm. There was a time when the 26th Brigade upon the right was hung up, but with fine initiative the right flank of the Transvaal Regiment worked down along the railway cutting and helped to clear the front of its neighbours. In the centre, the Thirty-fourth Division, after a short check at a network of trenches called "The Pump," had reached its allotted positions. In the north, the clansmen, who, as Territorials, were sprung from the very soil of the Highlands, had swiftly advanced to the south of Thelus, and had covered the right wing of the 1st Canadians while they captured that village. It was victory all along the line, and victory without those excessive losses which have made many of our greatest successes as tragic as they were glorious. The artillery barrage had been found to be a powerful antidote against the deadly machine-guns. "When our barrage lifted off the railway cutting, the machine-guns had been silenced and all the gunners were found to be dead." Such was the report of a South African officer.

Allusion has been made to the check caused by the strong point called "The Pump" and the trenches called the Kleemanstellung just east of it. Some detail should be added in this matter, for it retarded the attack of the flanks of two divisions, and the delay caused by it had the effect that the Canadians on the left and the Ninth upon the right were farther forward in the late afternoon than part of the Fifty-first and the Thirty-fourth, which might have caused a dangerous situation. The Thirty-fourth Division had advanced upon a three brigade front, which consisted from the south of the 101st, the 102nd, and 103rd. On the north of the 103rd was the 152nd Brigade of the Fifty-first Division, with the Seaforths as the flank battalion. This pestilent strong point, armed with well-served

VILLAGE-FIGHTING IN THE GREAT GERMAN PUSH.

and well-concealed machine-guns, lay between the two brigades and held up the flanks of both, inflicting considerable losses not only on the Seaforths, but on the 25th Northumberland Fusiliers, who were on the left of the Thirty-fourth Division. For a considerable time the advance was held. The 27th reserve battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers were sent up, and one of its companies, led with a fine mixture of valour and cunning, carried the place by storm. The whole line then got forward, but the losses had been heavy, including Colonel Hermon, of the 24th Northumberland Fusiliers. In the evening it was found that the final objective had not yet been fully attained at this quarter of the field, for it had been marked at a farm called Maison de la Côte, from which the front line was still a thousand yards distant. A brilliant little attack, however, by the 103rd Brigade (supplemented by a battalion from the 152nd Brigade) in the early morning of April 10th captured the whole position. Besides the check at The Pump, there had been another on the Fifty-first divisional front at a post called the "Deutsche Haus." The consequence of this was a loss of the barrage and a delay which led to the isolated left of the Fifty-first losing direction entirely and wandering round in a half-circle. The circumstances were so complex that it was not until next morning that they could be cleared up. Had the Germans had the spirit for a counter-attack, they would certainly have found a considerable gap in the line.

These events were in the northern area of the Seventeenth Corps. In the southern portion, at about eleven o'clock, the reserve division came forward, and passing through the weary ranks of the Ninth, pushed on along the northern bank of the river. The advance had already been a splendid one, the Ninth Division having two thousand prisoners to its credit, but this movement of the Fourth Division against an enemy who was already badly shaken was a very fruitful one. The 12th Brigade was nearest the Scarpe, with the 11th upon the left, while the 10th moved forward in close support. Two obstacles faced the division, the straggling village of Fampoux upon the bank of the river, and the Hyderabad Redoubt, a considerable fort to the north of the village. The 12th Brigade moved swiftly forward in the nearest approach to open warfare that had been seen for years. The 1st Royal Lancasters were on the right of the swift flexible line, the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers in the centre, and the 2nd Essex upon the left. The brigade fought its way in the teeth of a very hot fire to the outskirts of Fampoux, where the reserve battalion, the 2nd West Ridings, passed through the King's Own, and carried the village in splendid style late in the evening at the point of the bayonet. It is a remarkable fact that the wire in front of the village had not been cut by the artillery, and the infantry passed in single file through the gaps in it, after disposing of the only German machine-gunner who offered resistance. At the same time, the 11th Brigade kept pace upon their left flank—the 1st Hampshires to the left and Somersets to the right, while the 1st Rifle Brigade, passing through them, rushed the strong position of the Hyderabad Redoubt, and the 1st East Lancashires formed a defensive flank. Communication was at once opened across the Scarpe with Haldane's Corps upon the south

side. By this fine advance of the Fourth Division, the right of the Seventeenth Corps had got considerably farther forward than the left, so that a defensive line had to be formed sloping back from this advanced point to the third line German trenches. Such was the position upon the evening of the first day of battle. Meanwhile, three thousand five hundred prisoners with fifty captured guns testified to the success of the Seventeenth Corps.

ADVANCE OF BYNG'S CANADIAN CORPS.

We must now turn to the splendid achievement of the Canadian Corps upon the left. The reputation of the Canadians as brilliant soldiers, as dashing in attack as they were steady in defence, had already been solidly established by a long series of military feats, beginning with the ever-memorable second Battle of Ypres and continuing on to the capture of Courcelette and the fine fighting of the Somme. Hitherto they had acted in comparatively small bodies, but now the whole might of Canada was drawn together in the four fine divisions which lay facing the historic Vimy Ridge—a long, gradual slope which reaches a height of more than four hundred and fifty feet at the summit. They were arranged in their numerical order from the south, the first being in touch with the Fifty-first British Division, while the Fourth had upon its left Holland's First Corps, which was not engaged in the first day's operations. The front covered by the Canadians was from the south end of the ridge to the Souchez River, close to Lens. Nothing could have been more magnificent or more successful than their advance, the Second and Third Divisions attaining their full objectives at every point, and the First doing the same after a short check. There was no rebuff save in the extreme north of the line. Sweeping onwards with irresistible fury, they overran three lines of German trenches, including the famous La Folie farm, captured the village of Farbus, and secured the splendid total of seventy officers and three thousand five hundred men as prisoners —the same number as were taken by their British comrades to the immediate south. They not only crowned the redoubtable ridge, but they made their way down the eastern slope and established their line beyond it. Many of the German infantry were captured in the great chalk excavations in which they had taken refuge, two large tunnels in particular—the Volker and the Prinz Arnault tunnels—being crammed with men. Incredible incidents happened in these subterranean burrows, where small bodies of Canadian moppers-up were faced suddenly by large numbers of armed Germans in hiding. In one well-authenticated case four Canadians bluffed and captured four officers and one hundred and twenty-three men from a Bavarian corps, who were found in such a pocket. When the Kaiser in prophetic mood had spoken about what would happen when his Bavarians met the British, such an incident was far from his thoughts. It should be mentioned that the Fifth British Division was in close support of the Canadians, and that the 13th Brigade of this division was incorporated with the Second Canadians upon that day. It was used in conjunction with the 6th Canadian Brigade on its right to take the final objectives, the eastern slopes of the ridge, just north of Farbus Wood, which they did successfully with slight losses.

During the night of April 9th–10th there was fighting at several points, notably at the north end of the Vimy Ridge. Here the Fourth Canadian Division had some difficulty in holding its ground against several strong counter-attacks of the Germans. It is probable that no body of troops in the whole battle had a harder task, or stuck to it more tenaciously, than this Fourth Canadian Division. Hill 145, which was an outlier of the ridge, was very strongly held and d sperately defended, so that it would have turned any but first-class troops. The final clearing of this point was effected upon April 10th, and led to further operations in conjunction with British troops to the north.

THE RESULTS OF THE BATTLE.

The second day of the Battle of Arras, April 10th, was spent partly in the consolidation of the ground gained and partly in increasing the area now occupied. The troops were in high heart, for although the full extent of the victory had not yet been realized, it was already known that at least ten thousand prisoners and one hundred guns had fallen into our hands, figures which showed that the battle had been the most serious military disaster which had yet befallen the enemy. A fuller enumeration taken some days later gave thirteen thousand men, three howitzers, twenty-eight heavy guns, one hundred and thirty field-guns, eighty-four trench-mortars, and two hundred and fifty machine-guns as the total capture. It may be mentioned that over one thousand prisoners were taken from six different German divisions, which disposes of their mendacious assertion that only two divisions occupied their front. It was certainly the greatest blow delivered by the British Army up to that date, and the only other day's fighting at all comparable in its results was the French attack upon the Champagne front on September 25th, 1915, where the number of prisoners was greater but the capture of guns was less.

The Battle of Arras may be considered as having been in truth a one-day battle in the same sense as the succeeding Battle of Messines, for in each case the attack was delivered in order to gain a definite objective, which was the ridge from which observation could be obtained. The extreme limit of advance had not, however, been reached either in the south or in the north, and so in both these areas hard fighting continued, due partly to the efforts of the British to enlarge their gains and partly to the rally of the Germans and their attempts at counter-attack. There was no concentration of troops or guns, however, upon the side of the British, and no attempt at any considerable advance.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE.

In the Seventh Corps, to the south, the Fifty-sixth Division of London Territorials had (as

already described) enlarged the area which it had taken the day before in the Neuville Vitasse sector. The general curve of the line is such that it was not possible for the units of the Seventh Corps to get forward until the Sixth Corps to the north had won some ground; but upon the afternoon of the 12th a very fine advance was made, by which the Twenty-first Division stormed Wancourt and Heninel. The Cojeul River was crossed by the Fourteenth Light Division, and the heights upon the eastern bank were occupied. This brought the left flank of the Seventh Corps up to the right flank of the Sixth Corps, and ensured close co-operation in the operations to the north. This storming of the German position in this section was the more important as the troops were faced by the new Hindenburg Line. It was well known that an alternative line from Drocourt to Queant existed some miles to the eastward, but none the less the fall of the front section at a period when much of its wire was still intact proved to the Germans how impossible it was to hold off British troops by mere passive obstacles. The Tanks were of great assistance in this difficult operation.

During the night of April 10th the Twelfth Division was withdrawn into reserve, and the advance was resumed in the early morning by the remaining divisions and the cavalry. At 5 a.m. the infantry was closing in upon Monchy under a heavy fire. The line of advance extended right across the Cambrai Road, the 76th Brigade finding itself opposite to the village of Guémappe. Here they were exposed to a very heavy fire of machine-guns, and this famous brigade sustained heavy losses, which were increased by a second attempt to get forward in the afternoon. The 76th Brigade finally entrenched itself some half a mile to the west of Guémappe and waited for developments. The 8th Royal Lancasters were particularly hard hit in their attack.

In the meantime, the Thirty-seventh Division had advanced directly upon Monchy, and after severe fighting, in which the splendid infantry struggled onwards in the face of every possible difficulty of German resistance and of driving snow-storms, the place was carried by assault. The three regiments of cavalry from the 7th Brigade—the 3rd Dragoon Guards, 10th Hussars, and Essex Yeomanry—advanced at a gallop and did splendid service by taking part in the attack and by helping to consolidate the village. By nine o'clock in the morning the infantry, greatly aided by a very active and efficient Tank, had driven their way to the farthest houses upon the eastern side. About one hundred and fifty of the garrison remained in their hands, while very many lay dead among the ruins of the shattered buildings. The cavalry emerged on the eastern side of the village and lost heavily at that point, especially in horses, some five hundred of which were hit.

A GREAT FIGHT.

As no large movement was contemplated upon Haldane's front, it was now held by only two divisions, the Twenty-ninth to the south and the Seventeenth to the north, covering the whole broad area from the north of the Cojeul River to the south of the Scarpe. At five-thirty upon April 14th both divisions advanced in order to test the German strength and, if possible, to push them farther back from Monchy. It was an unsuccessful day, and yet it was one of those failures which will be remembered when facile successes have been forgotten, for it brought with it one episode which elicited in the highest degree the historical qualities of British infantry. It had been arranged that the 88th Brigade, consisting of the 2nd Hants, 4th Worcesters, 1st Essex, and the Newfoundland Regiment, should attack due east of Monchy, while another brigade of the Twenty-ninth Division should advance to their right, and the Seventeenth Division guard their flank upon the left. Both of the flank attacks failed, however, and the result was that the storming line of the 88th Brigade, consisting of the Essex men on the left and the Newfoundlanders on the right, found themselves in possession of the German trenches on Infantry Hill, east of Monchy, but with both wings exposed and with so terrible a barrage behind them that they were practically cut off from assistance. This might have mattered little in ordinary circumstances, since two such battalions might be counted upon to hold their ground, but by an evil chance their advance had coincided with a considerable German counter-attack from the Bois du Sart, made by a whole Bavarian division with the intention of retaking Monchy. The result was a Homeric contest in which two battalions held up the whole division, shattered a considerable attack, and were practically annihilated in doing so. Of some companies not a single man returned, and yet few were ever reported as prisoners in Germany. No more gallant feat of arms has been performed in the war. The 2nd Hants and 4th Worcesters in support did their best to help their comrades, and sustained considerable losses themselves in the attempt, but they were never able to reach the real front line, and it is undoubtedly true that the two battalions alone received and broke the full strength of the Bavarian division, which was entirely fresh, having taken no part in any previous fighting.

It was difficult in the barrage and confusion—the ground being unreconnoitred—to direct reinforcements to the points where they were so urgently needed, but an officer of the Essex passed through the German barrage and managed to bring up one company of the 2nd Hants, who came too late to retrieve the fight, but were able to take up the defence of the northern flank and to prevent the Germans from getting round in that quarter. Small parties of the enemy got up to the fringes of the village, but the edge had been taken completely from their assault, and in spite of the heavy barrage the staff of the brigade headquarters, who were the only troops available, were sufficient to hold them off. No German set foot in Monchy. Of the headquarter staff there were only nine survivors, each of whom was decorated.

THE PROBLEM CLUB

By BARRY PAIN.

No. XI.—THE Q-LOAN PROBLEM.

Illustrated by A. Garrett.

THE problem which came up for adjudication on this occasion was as follows :—

"It is required in three days to borrow as many things as possible, the name of each thing to begin with the letter Q. Nothing counts for the competition if its name is on the list of more than one member. No money may be given or promised in respect of any loan."

"I've arranged this," said Mr. Austin, who was the chairman for the evening, "so as to avoid any overstrain for myself. I shall call on that notorious painter and decorator, Mr. Wildersley, to begin with his list. When he has finished he will call on somebody else. The second man in his turn will name the third, and so on. If anything is read out by another member which is also down on your own list, hold up your hand. The secretary will keep the score. That leaves me absolutely nothing to do until it is time to announce the winner, and I shall probably go to sleep. So don't make any disturbing noises, please. You can begin now, Wildersley."

"My score is six," said Wildersley, "unless some of you selfish men have had the same ideas as I have. On my first day I borrowed two things—one of which people seem to show hesitation about lending, while the other was a thing that very few people have got to lend nowadays. In fact, I borrowed a quid and a quill-pen."

Many hands went up.

"This is painful and surprising," said Wildersley, "and reduces my score to four. On the second day I visited a female relative, said that I had a cold coming on, and had no difficulty in borrowing some quinine and a quilt."

But a show of hands indicated that others had found it equally easy.

"That brings me down to two, but the last two are good. I doubt if any other member could have thought of them, or could have borrowed them in any case. But I happen to know a painter who has got whole wardrobes full of costumes—uses them for his alleged pictures. From him I borrowed, firstly, a queue."

"I appeal to the chairman," said Jimmy Feldane, confidently. "That word is spelled with a K."

"No," said the chairman. "You are probably thinking of the Gardens of the same name."

"In any case it's the thing they have outside the pit entrance, and you can't borrow it."

"That will be for Mr. Wildersley to explain."

"I did not borrow a crowd outside a pit entrance," said Wildersley. "But I did borrow the tie of a wig, which is another meaning of the word. That's one to me, anyhow. And I also borrowed a quoif."

"Surely, sir," said Mr. Quillian, "that word is spelled with a C ?"

The chairman consulted a useful work of reference, and announced that the word was spelled in both ways.

"May we have your authority for that statement ?"

"Standard dictionary."

"And will you define a standard dictionary for the purposes of this competition ?"

"For the purposes of this competition a standard dictionary is any dictionary that was published subsequently to the eighteenth century and cost more than fivepence-halfpenny originally."

"It doesn't much matter really, for as the word is also on my own list neither Wildersley nor I can score it."

"You might have said that before," said the chairman. "It looks as if you were giving me trouble on purpose."

And it is quite possible that his surmise was correct. The Problem Club does not allow its chairman to sleep when on duty. Sir Charles Bunford requested him to state what Mr. Wildersley's score was ; and it may not have been from inadvertence that Wildersley neglected to name his successor and left it to the chairman to do so. He called upon Dr. Alden.

"Well," said the Doctor, "I had borrowed quinine, of course, but that has been ruled out. I also borrowed some quassia from the same man. No hands up ? I think I score one for quassia, if the chairman admits it."

The chairman consulted his dictionary and said that quassia appeared to be all right. He was immediately asked by Mr. Pusely-Smythe if he could inform the members whether quassia was a summer drink or an intermittent fever.

"At the present moment," said Mr. Austin, severely, "I am giving my most eager and concentrated attention to the conscientious discharge of my arduous duties. I cannot be

interrupted by purely frivolous questions. Dr. Alden will proceed."

"I further borrowed a quadrant and a thermometer."

"I fear," said the chairman, "that I must rule that the word thermometer does not begin with the letter Q."

"Your rapid grasp of these fine points, sir, impels my admiration. But with great respect I would point out that this thermometer contained mercury, and therefore in borrowing the thermometer I borrowed quicksilver. My remaining loans consisted of a quarto and a quotation."

But other members had borrowed both a quarto and a quotation. Dr. Alden was accordingly left with a score of three.

Major Byles, who came next, had done better. In the course of a morning stroll with a neighbouring landowner over his property he had borrowed some weird things. His list consisted of a quarry, a quicksand, some quickset, quitch-grass, and quicklime. And as none of these things had been borrowed by any other member he scored five. But he did not seem entirely happy about it.

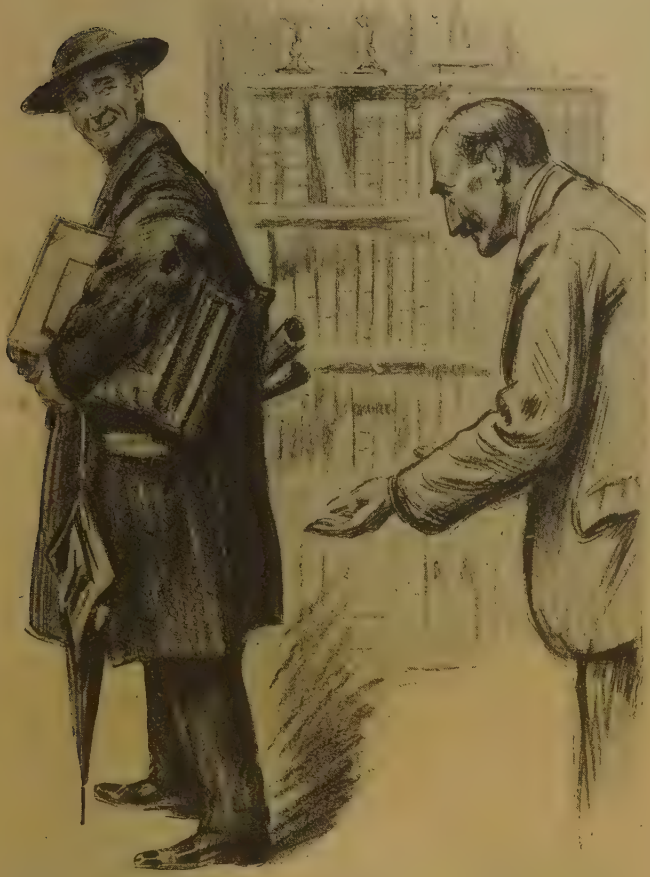
"The trouble with these problems," he said, "is that one has to do absolutely idiotic things, and consequently one is likely to be thought an absolute idiot. I did the best I could. I invented quite a plausible story about a geological friend to account for the quarry and the quicksand. But I believe that my neighbour goes about saying that poor old Byles is far from well, and tapping his forehead to indicate the nature of my complaint. It's most unpleasant. Still, five ain't such a bad score. How did you get on with that quagga, Jimmy?"

"HE HAD BORROWED A QUARRY."

"Nothing doing," said Jimmy. "I went to the Zoo, just as I said I would. But, if you ask me, the whole place is rotten with red tape and officialism. They wouldn't lend me the blessed quagga, though I promised them I'd return it in five minutes. Said it was not customary to lend out the animals, and a lot of silly talk like that. Quite obstinate about it, too. I'd got Hesseltine there to take a snapshot of me shepherding the quagga in the wilds of Regent's Park, and it simply meant our valuable time thrown away. Also, it appeared that quaggas are out of print and they'd not got one.

"But quite apart from that I'm not claiming to have won. I've only got two things down on my list that have not been claimed so far. The first was the queen of spades from a pack of cards, and the second is the four kings from the same pack. I don't spell the word king with a Q, but the four of them are a quatorze, at piquet. But a score of two's no use, and I shall probably be described on my tombstone as brainy but unfortunate. Meanwhile I notice a sunny smile on the face of our *padre*, as if he were a prize-winner. He might tell us how he did it."

The Rev. Septimus Cunliffe had certainly been energetic and industrious. To start with he had called upon an old friend of his, a man of some learning with an interest in music and a fair library. Here he had no difficulty in borrowing Quixote, Quevedo, Quintillian, Quain, and some quadrilles, quartets, and quintets. He engaged his host in a discussion as to the precise meaning of a quip, a quirk, and a quiddity, persuaded him to write down an instance of each, and borrowed the



"HE HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN BORROWING QUIXOTE, QUEVEDO, QUINTILLIAN, QUAIN, AND SOME QUADRILLES."

instances. He borrowed a quatrain of his host's composition, and twenty-four sheets of note-paper, which make a quire.

The next two days were less productive, but he borrowed a specimen of quartz from one man and a dog, which was unquestionably a quadruped, from another. A lady who was interested in archery lent him a quiver. Loans of a quoit, a quart of milk, and a quarter of coal were also negotiated.

But all the same his smile of self-congratulation was premature. He was not destined to score eighteen, for the simple reason that he had not borrowed a single thing which was not on the list of either Lord Herngill, or Mr. Quillian, or Mr. Pusely-Smythe. And they in their turn could not score because everything on their lists was also on the parson's. Industry had cancelled industry; ingenuity had destroyed ingenuity.

The only other member who could produce a score at all was Mr. Matthews. He registered a modest score of one for having borrowed a quarrel. It was in vain that Hesseltine maintained that you could pick a quarrel but could not borrow one. The chairman referred to his standard dictionary and learned that a quarrel was not necessarily a dispute; it might be a diamond-shaped pane of glass, which was in fact what Mr. Matthews had borrowed.

"Well," said the chairman, "Major Byles is the winner, and I think he deserves to be. The rest of you were a tame set of sheep, laborious and ingenious, but without any proper spirit of enterprise. But nobody could walk out calmly one morning and borrow a quarry and a quicksand unless he were really adventurous. To do that was magnificent and Elizabethan. I confess that I should like to know what the neighbour said when the Major borrowed the quitch-grass."

"Oh, the old chap didn't say much," said Major Byles. "That was the last thing I borrowed, and by that time he seemed rather worried and nervous. I told him quite a good story, too, about a nephew in London who wanted a specimen for botanical purposes. The real trouble was that, as it had to be a loan, I sent the beastly weed back to him three days later. That was when he decided I really must have had a touch of the sun, or had given way to the habit, or something of that kind. But I shall live it down. Anyway, I've won, and I don't care if it snows."

"Quite so. In the problems of this club, as in the problems of life, it sometimes happens that courage and character will do more than low cunning to effect a solution. And I hope that this will be a lesson to certain members who, by a series of vexatious and needless questions, have deprived me of my proper rest this evening. However, I shall shortly be taking it out of them at bridge, and they have my forgiveness."

"If," said Pusely-Smythe, "the chairman has finished infringing the prerogative of our *padre* by delivering a sermon, he will perhaps inform us what the next problem is."

"Certainly," said the chairman, cheerfully. "I was forgetting. It is Dr. Alden's turn to take the chair next time, but complications have arisen. I've had a letter from the talented editor of *The Pig-Keeper's Friend*, who sets our problems and, as you will remember, was introduced to us by Lord Herngill. It appears that, in consequence of his personal knowledge of the esteemed editor, Lord Herngill would have an unfair advantage in this next competition, and is therefore with his own consent disqualified for it. But for the same reason he is specially qualified to adjudicate on the

problem. I have mentioned the matter to Herngill and the Doctor, and they are both willing to exchange their turns as chairman. So that, subject to your approval, Herngill will be the chairman at our next meeting. I will put it to you, gentlemen."

The proposal met with general approval.

"That's all right," said the chairman. "Then we can have the card-tables brought in. And if I can only manage to cut with the Major, I fancy that our opponents will have a pretty thin time. This is his evening."

"I do not wish," said Mr. Quillian, solemnly, "to dispute the statement, but even now we do not know what the problem for next month is to be."

"You're right," said the chairman; "you're absolutely right. It's funny, but if I forget a thing once I nearly always forget it twice. However, as a matter of fact I don't yet know it myself. Here it is in its sealed envelope. We will investigate it."

He tore open the envelope and glanced at the contents.

"Well," he said, "I really don't know why he made so much fuss about it. You couldn't have anything simpler. He calls it 'The Pig-Keeper's Problem.' This is all it is: 'It is required to buy a copy of the current issue of *The Pig-Keeper's Friend.*' I don't see any difficulty about that, do you, Leonard?"

But Leonard declined to be drawn. "I should like to have notice of that question," he said.

THE SPELL OF GREATNESS.

By Alick P. F. Ritchie.

HERE is a new form of portraiture—each likeness being composed of the letters spelling the name of the celebrity. We invite readers to submit further examples. Any used will be paid for.

DAVID AND JONATHAN.

By E. TEMPLE THURSTON.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

David Mortlake and John Hawkesley—hereinafter called David and Jonathan, as they were in their friendship at school—are shipwrecked and washed ashore on a tropical beach, with the only other survivor, a girl named Joan, as their sole companion. They lead a "Swiss Family Robinson" kind of life until, with the dawning of love, a new element of distrust enters into the situation.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOR the whole of the next week Joan kept her distance. There was nothing small or petty about her attitude. To all appearances, she talked to them the same as usual, but in indescribable ways they were made to feel that they were outside the pale. And every day they were getting nearer to that moment when they would be ready to start upon their first bid for escape.

It was about three days before that which was set out for their great adventure, David was returning from the spring where they got their daily supply of water.

When he was about a hundred yards from the edge of the forest, he heard a commotion amongst a troop of monkeys over his head. Creeping forward as softly as he could to find out what it was, he saw Joan half-way up a tree just off the edge of their water track. She had found a comfortable seat in a fork of the branches, and from there leaned out and was picking a whole cluster of deep scarlet orchids of some climbing variety that were blooming in a lightsome gap of the trees.

David was just about to hurry forward to her assistance, when he stopped. She had thrust the blossoms into her pocket, plucked without stem or thought for preservation. It was the petals alone she was collecting. What for? He stood there silent, a moment longer, and then he understood. Out of another pocket she fetched a little mirror. Holding it up to her face as she sat there, she looked at its reflection. There was no mistaking what it was. Then, taking a petal of one of the orchids in her fingers, she crushed it and rubbed it first on her lips, then on her cheeks, regarding the operation all the time in her glass, and finally throwing the bruised petal away. That being done, she applied her puff, though heaven knows what small quantity of powder she must have had left by that time. Finally, with the completion of her purpose, she was just proceeding to descend as David moved forward, and then she caught sight of him, when every movement in her body was arrested. He had seen. He must have seen. She knew it as surely as if he had shouted out his knowledge, and with it all the things she knew must be in his mind about her with the discovery he had made.

David came forward, standing at the bottom of the tree and asking if he could help her down.

"It won't be such a simple matter as it was getting up," he said.

She declined any assistance he could give her and began to descend, with considerable difficulty. At last she stood on the ground beside him.

If any word can describe his sensations, that word is fear. He felt suddenly afraid of her; afraid of her knowledge of the power of her sex and that evident determination in her mind, which this incident proved, to make use of it.

Appreciating quickly enough that secrecy and a tacit understanding in silence of the matter would merely aggravate its importance in his mind, she seized, by instinct, the only logical consequence of her behaviour. She had it out with him straightaway.

"I suppose," she said, with a smile, superficially full of good humour, but which for that very reason seemed the more dangerous to him—"I suppose you think it more or less silly for a woman to think about her appearance in primitive sort of surroundings like this, where there are no women to notice how she looks one way or another."

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"OUT OF ANOTHER POCKET SHE FETCHED A LITTLE MIRROR. HOLDING IT UP TO HER FACE AS SHE SAT THERE, SHE LOOKED AT ITS REFLECTION."

David felt a twitch of laughter somewhere in his mind at the clever way in which she ignored the subject of sex.

"If you want to cut a woman right off from civilization," she continued, "I expect you'd have to take her mirror away from her. If she

has one"—she produced her own little pocket affair from some receptacle in her garments—"she's bound to look at it, and if she looks at it, she's bound to see that her complexion is going to the dogs unless she takes care of it. But then, possibly, you don't realize what her complexion is to a woman. There was one of those scarlet orchids in that bunch of flowers Jonathan got for my birthday. That's when I first thought of it. I tried it that evening. It squeezes out a lovely deep red juice. It may be bad for the skin. I don't know. I haven't found any—what they call deleterious effects—yet. Oh, my heavens! Are you going to stand there for ever, just looking at me and saying nothing?"

She found David's silence more critical than she could bear. Her effort at passing off the situation was spent in all that flow of talk. She could do no more.

"I don't know there's anything for me to say," he replied, at last. "I suppose, as you say, the glass explains it. So long as a pretty woman is kept conscious of her complexion, I presume it's her natural instinct to look after it."

He must have convinced her by that because, in a sudden impulse, she took his arm with a companionable movement and turned him with her in the direction of the creek.

Presently she stopped and turned him round so that he must look into her face, asking him if there was too much red on her lips or cheeks.

"I sort of feel you'd know if I had," she said. "You'd understand things like that. Jonathan wouldn't. Either he'd notice nothing, or he'd be horribly shocked at a woman—especially in this sort of place—thinking it necessary to make-up at all. But you realize, I'm sure you do, how a woman must miss all the little lotions and things that she has at home."

Before they reached the edge of the forest, Joan took her hand from his arm and stopped again.

"Will you do me a favour?" she asked.

He inquired what it was.

"Will you promise to say nothing to Jonathan of what you saw this morning?"

He knew by the tone of her voice that she had said this after long and uncomfortable hesitation. And now he was caught in a gust of passion, but this time it was the wildest and the maddest jealousy.

Again he felt that surge of the hot spring of his blood as he stood there looking right down into the deep grey of her eyes. She must have known then, and more surely than she did at her breakfast feast when she touched Jonathan's hand, that something was all wrong somewhere.

An expression of fear flickered for a moment in her face as he looked at her. But she was no coward. It soon went.

"Why don't you answer?" she asked presently, in a steady tone of voice. "What's the matter?"

"You're fond of Jonathan, are you?" said he. And the moment he had said it, self-revealing as he had known her request to have been, realized his own was a thousand times more so.

The instant she threw back her head and her voice rang with cheery laughter, he knew what a fool he had been.

"Fond of Jonathan!" she exclaimed. "Just because I don't want him to hear something which I know he won't understand! You must know less about women than I thought, if you imagine I'm fond of a man because I have a little pride in myself about him. You know. You saw. You caught me. I shouldn't have let you see if I'd known. I suppose men think that a woman, in a situation like this, is bound to get fond of one or the other of the two men she finds herself cast adrift with. My goodness! What conceit!"

She laughed again and looked at him humorously, as he stood there before her feeling a most consummate fool.

For he had wilfully given her that opportunity, and for a woman alone with two men in that predicament, what other course could she have taken? All her instincts were there, alive and alert to protect herself. She could have done no otherwise.

But how he longed to tell her what a liar she was; to show her that that very deed, in the act of which he had caught her, was the proof positive that she wanted to enslave the one or the other of them; and that, with the request she had just made, what other assumption could he make but that Jonathan was the one?

"You may call it conceit if you like," David replied; "it had at least the recommendation of not being self-conceit. I asked you if you were fond of Jonathan; not of me."

She became serious at once and for a moment confused.

"I didn't mean to hurt you," she said, gently—a gentleness which, instead of calming him, only made his heart beat the faster. "I wasn't really accusing you of conceit. Only men in general. That's their common attitude of mind. They think they're irresistible."

David shook his head.

"You make a big mistake about us when you think that," said he. "Vanity and conceit have little or nothing to do with it. All that a normal man thinks is that the laws are irresistible; not himself. It's the common attitude of women to deny that. The Suffragettes most vehemently deny it in their Suffrage papers, and there are thousands of timid, well-brought-up women who hug themselves in secret because some of their sex have the courage to say what they all of them drive themselves to believe. That's all it is, and, in a civilized world, where there are four-o'clock tea-parties and if you want to see a certain lady in whom you are interested you can call on her every second Thursday, when she will be at home with her mother to all the family acquaintances, that belief is all right. It holds good. It is the only sort of belief you could express in becoming language on a second Thursday in the month. But it isn't the sort of language in a place like this. You ask me not to tell Jonathan that you've been rougeing your lips and putting colour in your cheeks. Well—that's not the

sort of favour you'd ask of me on a second Thursday in the month. On the second Thursday in the month, if I had the audacity to ask you during a buzz of the conversation if you were fond of my friend, you'd be well within your rights if you snubbed me straightaway. That might be conceit on my part, if not for myself, then for the attractions of my sex. But here"—he looked up at a noise in the upper branches of the forest trees, and there were two monkeys fighting for dear life, with a whole crowd of others gathered round with amiable curiosity to watch the outcome. "Look at that," said he.

She turned and looked, then turned away.

"I shall never like monkeys," she said.

"No," he replied; "they're abominably like men."

CHAPTER IX.

THERE is one incident connected with their efforts to escape from that shore which is worth mention. The day before they attempted to launch the *Malaga's* boat through those barriers of surf Joan had come to Jonathan with her tree-bear in her arms. The little beggar had become mightily attached to her. She fed it and fed it well. There was no other secret to it than this. Women have discovered that same secret about men since the days in the garden of Eden.

There was a suspicious glitter in her eyes as she came up to where they were putting the finishing touches to the *Malaga's* boat. David could see at once the tremendous problem it really was in her mind: for what a woman gives in affection seems to become a part of herself.

She held the little beggar in her two hands, and as Jonathan turned round at her approach she said, "What am I to do with Sam when we go to-morrow?"

"What do you mean, what are you to do?" replied Jonathan. There was only one aspect of it to him. "What did you think you were going to do with him?" he added.

She screwed her lips up rather than let him see the moment's quiver in them.

"I thought I might be able to take him home," said she.

"Take him home!" Jonathan echoed. "Hang it! this is his home—isn't it? D'you imagine he won't fare better here than with you looking after him in an open boat for six days or more? Good heavens, he doesn't want your help to get along in life!"

Every word he said was pure and unadulterated common sense. It was a preposterous question on her part from every point of view but one. It was just this very point of view which Jonathan overlooked.

"I'll be entirely responsible for it," she declared, quickly.

"Oh, that's all nonsense!" he replied, as equably as he could. "You'll find you've got more than enough to do to look after yourself. That little beast'll be best off of the whole lot of us."

"It can't climb a tree yet," she retorted.

"No," said he, "but it will; Nature'll teach it that quicker than you can."

"Yes—and when we've gone, one of those leopards will get it. I saw the mark of one of their paws in the sand outside the palisade—only yesterday."

"Well, it'll be a quick death," replied Jonathan. "Quicker than ours if we make a mess of things to-morrow."

And with that he turned away to his work, too impatient with the whole subject to waste more words upon it. Joan went back to the hut with Sam in her arms. It was so abominably obvious he was right that she, too, could say no more.

That evening she did not appear at supper. Half-way through, David suggested that one of them should call her, intending that one to be himself.

"Better let her alone," said Jonathan. "It's no good trying to understand women. If she likes to sulk——"

"She's not going to sulk," said David.

"Well, whatever she's doing, let her have it out with herself. We can't do any good. That's just the sort of thing which makes me thank God I'm not married."

As soon as David had finished, he went out to see what had become of her. The door of her hut was locked. He knocked and knocked again. At last she answered. He told her who it was and a moment later the door slowly opened. She appeared in front of him, her eyes red with weeping.

"What's happened?" he asked. "Why didn't you come in to supper?"

There must have been a tone in his voice touching sympathy with her. Anyhow, for answer, she just opened the door a little wider, and there on the floor he saw the body of Sam lying still in all that looseness of death.

"What have you done?" he asked.

"Killed him," she replied.

David looked at her, in wonder.

"He would have been killed," she said. "He couldn't have escaped from those leopards. They would have mauled and tortured him just like cats do. I know what brutes they are. And, of course, Jonathan was right. I knew all the time I couldn't take him—so I—so I——"

She broke down, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world for David to put his hands round her shoulders and let her cry her heart out in his arms.

As she disengaged herself from him, he looked back with a sudden instinct to the other hut, and there was Jonathan in the act of turning back through the door. He had seen them, and he had wished to see no more.

CHAPTER X.

THEIR two efforts of escape proved failures. With the first, as Jonathan had supposed, they were unable to launch the boat; with the second, after ten days' wandering in the forest to find a track out into the interior, Joan got fever and to save her life they were compelled to return.

As soon as she was well, Jonathan called

"HE HAD SEEN THEM, AND HE WISHED TO SEE NO MORE."

what they now generally spoke of as a board-meeting.

He had been intensely serious of mood ever since their return to the creek; had spoken little of his mind to David, and, indeed, had not been the best of companions.

"It's no good playing about with it," he said to them, squarely. "I don't know whether you two have realized what these failures of ours have meant. Vaguely, I suppose you have. Vaguely you've said to yourselves: 'Well, sooner or later we shall have to have another shot, and, in the meantime, there's this place, free of fever, to live in.' That's what I imagine you've thought. I've tried to think it myself, ever since we came back out of the forest. But it's no good. I know a dam' sight better than that. I'm not going to apologize for language.

"I know what we're up against, and I've called this blessed board-meeting to tell you what it is. We've tried the only two means of escape I know of, and now it's up to a remote chance that we aren't here for the rest of our natural lives."

He stopped for a moment and looked at them; first at David, lastly at Joan. And his last was no mere glance. It was a long, long look that would have become embarrassing only that he presently went on:—

"I want to say straight out and first of all, that I don't think it's anybody's fault. It just happened that Joan was the first to kick under to the fever. We ought really to be grateful to her. She acted as a warning. If we hadn't turned back then, I haven't the slightest doubt we should both have been down with it ourselves, and then there'd have been the deuce to pay. I'm not chucking compliments about, but I should never have thought a woman could be so plucky as she's been."

"Hear, hear!" said David.

"Or that you, David," he continued, "could

have worked like you've done. I never thought you had it in you."

David felt like a schoolboy taking a prize from the Lord Mayor and not knowing what the devil to say.

"That's enough of that, anyhow," Jonathan went on. "Those are the facts. Unless a ship outside sees our signals—and you can guess how likely that is—I see small chances, if any, of our getting away. That chance might come to-morrow, it might come when we're doddering old creatures and some enterprising company is opening up the coast of Liberia for trading purposes. Pray God I'm under the sand before then.

"Well, that's what I've called you in here for, because I think it's only fair you should face it and set your minds out to what it really means. It means that we've got no other—what David would call—expression for our lives outside this hundred square yards of creek; that here we are to make of ourselves the best we can and get the best we can out of it. Personally, I must admit my ambitions are not hugely stimulated. That's not to be wondered at. Once this place is as comfortably habitable as we can make it, there's not much left for me to do, and it is with me that I must be doing something. Now, if either of you have got anything to say, let's have it all out while we're here and then take the gifts the gods have given us without saying anything more about it. Certainly I don't feel inclined to thank 'em for what they've given me."

Having asked them to say something, David looked at Joan, giving her preference. She looked at him, waiting as well. The fact of the matter was, they neither of them wanted to speak at all. What David wanted to say could not be said there. Somehow or other, it was exactly the same with her, only that being one woman and alone with those two, hers could not have been said anywhere.

David remarked that there did not seem to be anything further to add. Joan rose from her chair, saying: "I've got nothing to say. You know more about it than we do, Jonathan. I'm sure I'm quite ready to place myself in your hands with anything you choose to do. You know best. And that's all there is to be said—isn't it?"

CHAPTER XI.

So the situation had been shaped and moulded in the hand of circumstance after three months of their life in the creek.

Every day after that board-meeting Jonathan went alone down to the beach, ostensibly to fish in the channel, but really, as Joan and David well knew, to look out at those passing steamers which regularly every week went by, dim spirits of his discontent, half-hidden behind the far line of that horizon.

On these occasions David and Joan saw much of each other, and if it should be wondered why he did not seize one of the many opportunities he must have had to tell her what was in his mind about her, the following incident may give explanation.

They were sitting out one morning on a flat projection of rock in the face of the cliff where an overhanging tree gave its welcome shade. So delightful a shelter from the sun was it that from time to time in those three months at the creek they had cut out a small stairway of steps in the rock, making it the more accessible.

Jonathan was away at the beach. They were completely alone, sitting there looking down over the palisade across the creek into the forest below. A tremendous specimen of a crocodile was moving about sluggishly in the water beyond the palisade. David knew she was watching it. He was watching it himself. The same train of thought must have been in both their minds at the same time, for presently she said:—

"I wonder do these animals in the forest ever feel the sense of their own utter desolation?"

"Do *you?*" said he.

She seemed to wake from her contemplation of that old beast with a start, as though he had stirred her out of sleep from an unpleasant dream into the unconsciousness of a still more unpleasant reality.

"I suppose I do sometimes," she replied, and there was almost a tragic note in her voice. "Splendid and cheerful as you both are—you—you couldn't expect me to feel otherwise."

"What do you miss most of all?" David asked, and knew when he had said this that before their conversation that morning was over the chances were he would have put all his hopes to the test and told her that he loved her. He did not know all the chances when he thought that.

"What do you miss most?" he repeated, fully determined now to see it out.

She stared for a long while down into the forest before she answered, and then she said, "I miss the purpose of it all."

"Of our being cast adrift here?"

"Yes—and—and of the whole of life. One would have imagined that in a place like this everything would have been absurdly simple. Well, foolishly enough, it seems to me absurdly the reverse. I can't see the meaning; I can't see the end of it at all. Are we just going to—to die here, and bury each other in the sand of that creek, one after the other, till the last one's left alone to just lie down when his turn comes and let the leopards eat him or the sand blow over him? Can you understand what I mean? I'm all confused. It's like a riddle, or a maze, with no way out—a senseless business, where you chafe and chafe against the conditions but can do nothing to alter them."

She was thinking just as he was. Was she to miss the purpose of hers, of every woman's life? And if not, then in which of those two did her fate lie? There was her confusion of thought. And how, indeed, was it all going to end?

"I'm only going to say what I said once before," said David—"the laws, not we, are irresistible. Over in England they are written

on parchment, and are at your service if you are ready to pay a lawyer's fees and the costs of litigation. Here you're the slave of the law—we're all the same—all of us. Force dictates—sheer brute force in the end. Does that make it any simpler ? "

She looked straight into his eyes after a few moments, and replied, quite steadily : " No—it only makes it worse."

" Worse, perhaps," said he, " but not less simple. You had to kill Sam. That was force—brute force, however gentle in the heart of it the motive may have been. Jonathan's was the force that compelled you to use your own. A common law of self-protection, stronger than him, drove Jonathan."

" I've never hated him for it," she replied, quickly ; " I know he had to do it." And it was that answer which, rightly or wrongly, in that moment seemed to him to be the answer to it all. His hopes of winning her then, all his intentions of saying what was in his mind, dropped from him on that instant. He could do no more than sit there with his chin on his hands, staring down into the forest, hearing all the time those words revolving in his head, " I've never hated him for it. I know he had to do it."

She must intuitively have known a greater part of that which was in his mind, because after a moment she suddenly put out her hand. It was a frank and generous movement. There was no mistaking its impulse, and he took it in his own.

" We're all the best of friends—aren't we ? " said she, openly. " I know you two are, and "—then she laughed—" I promise you I'm not going to be left out in the cold. Good heavens ! What else could we be in a place like this ? "

As David held her hand firmly in his own he said, " Friendship is one of the most perfect affections under the sun—but do you think it contains the meaning of life you spoke about just now ? "

She let her hand stay in his a moment longer, then silently she took it away, rose to her feet, and climbed down the steps to the creek.

CHAPTER XII.

About a week after that conversation between Joan and David, there befell an incident which brought about the swift hastening of events.

Jonathan had been down, as had almost become his habit, to the creek. David and Joan were awaiting his return, seated as before on that edge of rock, but talking of subjects less intimate than upon that former occasion. She must have known by then that David was in love with her, yet so long as his declaration had not been made, felt herself safe while matters remained as they were. It proves how skilful her treatment of those two men must have been, that she kept her hands upon the reins of circumstance so long.

They had been talking for some time when either because she was hungry and Jonathan was bringing the meal, or because of some remark David had made about his friend, her thoughts began to turn more persistently upon Jonathan. Gradually David was finding that he could not be eliminated from the conversation. Back she came to him again and again, till at last, as the sun was dropping in its swift descent below the topmost line of the trees, she proposed they should go down and look for him.

Down the steps to the creek they went and to the verge of the forest, the sensation overtaking them at every step that something had happened to keep him so late. When suddenly and unexpectedly she raised her voice, calling his name loudly, three separate times, David felt, not only a thrill of fear at what might have happened, but, far deeper than that, a hot sense of jealousy she could be so concerned.

And then Jonathan appeared out of the thick growth of elephant grass, walking unsteadily as though he soon must fall either from some weakness that had overcome him, or the weight of the thing he carried on his shoulders.

They stood a moment, arrested by surprise at the unsteadiness of his steps. The first thing they realized was that he was carrying the body of a leopard, a huge specimen, slung over his back. As he came nearer they saw his face was bleeding, and those thick tanned arms of his were torn with great gashes from which the blood was dripping in a stream and falling in big drops from his finger-tips. He had fought, but he had won.

In an instant Joan had hurried through the gate in the palisade and was at his side, freeing the load from his shoulders. The next, and David had joined her. Together, they helped him into the hut. He was weak from loss of blood. All the clothes on his body were drenched with it. He laughed at their efforts to help him, and then, strong man though he was, he dropped off into unconsciousness.

CHAPTER XIII.

Joan nursed him and attended to his bandages for ten days, and it must be supposed that this job was well to her liking. She ruled him like a child, except over one matter. He insisted on skinning his beast the next morning. This was no job of which David was capable. He offered, but there was a skin to save and Jonathan, being the only one to do it, would take no orders from her.

" You'd like the skin, wouldn't you ? " said he, and when she could not deny it, added—" Then don't let's have any more nurse's talk."

Beyond this matter, however, he was as obedient as a child, suffering with pleasure all the pain she gave him with her unskilled bandaging.

During all those ten days when he never saw her alone and only shared her company at meal-times, David was left to fret his soul out with the best grace he could. What is more, the finding of the supply of food devolved entirely on him, and, though he may have succeeded well enough, there was a noticeable difference in his catering to that of Jonathan's. One evening he returned from the beach without any fish at

"THE FIRST THING THEY REALIZED WAS THAT HE WAS CARRYING THE BODY OF A LEOPARD."

all, when they had to content themselves solely with fruit. His traps were not so successfully set as when Jonathan was responsible for them.

It seems to have been in those ten days, left so much to himself, robbed of her company and feeling by instinct that every moment she was endearing herself to Jonathan, that David came by the first real impulses of enmity for his friend.

What had they said to each other that day? he wondered. How had their friendship progressed? Whenever he saw her examining that leopard skin with pleasure at the thought of her ultimate possession of it, he could have cursed the luck that had brought it within range of Jonathan's weapon. And every day he felt that Jonathan was growing to understand and, what was more, to like her better. Weak though he was from loss of blood and more than ever a prisoner in that bed to which she kept him, his moodiness steadily disappeared.

Had it continued for another day beyond those ten, David must have spoken out his mind to her; must have forced her into that invidious position of choosing between them, when she had shown him so plainly by her proffer of friendship that she would do anything to avoid it. The issue lay between himself and Jonathan. He still believed that. Her choice in that matter made very little difference to them. She was the justification of their lives there on that God-forsaken coast, and for that justification David was quite ready to take whatever risks there might be.

But in the back of his mind was the knowledge, always repressed in his thoughts, that in that place Jonathan was a fitter mate for her than he was. In those conditions of life, well though they might have been able to face contingencies together, he was the better equipped, the fittest of those two to carry out the elemental preservation of his kind.

Whenever he looked at it in this light, David despaired most of all; for there was cause enough for any man who prided himself on his reason to stand aside. Yet the preservation of his kind had as much right upon insistence as had Jonathan's. It was as dear, if not dearer, to David. Set in those environments, was his the kind that would survive in obedience to the common and primal laws with which it was surrounded?

So he argued it back and forth as though it were a mere dispassionate problem in Eugenics. But there was the crux of it all. It was not dispassionate. Try as he would, he could not make it so. If ever a problem was quivering with the existence of passion, this was one. How could he yield his claim? He lived. In his body was the breath, in his mind the same spark of life as in Jonathan.

And then, suddenly—it was on that tenth day—it all became clear. He had the right of his own entity. He had the justification to claim her if he could. This was the test of life—not to give in, but to struggle; not to surrender, but to fight. It was due to himself to prove what strength he had. It was due to Jonathan to test and prove his own.

CHAPTER XIV.

From the day of Jonathan's recovery from his wounds the strain upon these two appears to have increased with a steady and inevitable precision. Once having confessed to himself his belief in the ultimate issue, David's thoughts seem to have permeated all their minds. He and Jonathan were watching each other now, quick-eyed to notice the development of each other's relations with Joan, yet, doubtless, striving in their secret ways to avoid or postpone the unavoidable.

It was obvious that such a state of affairs could not last for long. That it lasted as long as it did seems only explicable in the fact that they were both endeavouring to ward it off for her sake.

That both loved and wanted her then she was well aware. There is proof of this in the way she strove to ignore their present moods and suggest they were, so far as she could see, the same friends as ever.

All these efforts of hers, however, must have failed, for there came a day when she felt she must speak her thoughts to one of them, and it appears inevitable she should have chosen David for her confidant. Whatever there was to be understood, she turned involuntarily to him.

It was one morning after their breakfast that she taunted Jonathan with laziness.

"Ever since you got well," said she, with a laugh, "you've been as idle as you can be."

Perhaps the truth of that touched him. But when she told him they had had no fish those seven days or more because he had never been down to the beach his face fell, so obviously that in any other situation the fall of it would have been humorous.

"David might as well go," said he; "I've caught most of the fish we've ever eaten here."

She had the wit to laugh at him as though he were a child.

"That's just why you ought to go," said she. "Don't you remember one of the days when you were laid up David came back without catching anything? And can't I say I should like some?"

"If David's not a skilled labourer," said he, "we sha'n't be able to give him a vote at the board of directors." And he went off laughing at his thrust, which had its subtlety of point that pierced through the chinks of David's armour and made the blood sting hot in his face.

That, as he knew well enough, was the crux of it all. Because of that, when it came to the test between them, he felt in his despondent moments that of a certainty he would fail.

But once Jonathan had gone, there they were alone in the creek. Feeling in those moments that the world belonged to them two, his spirits rose no sooner had the sound of Jonathan's paddle died away in the distance.

For a long time, however, after he had gone neither of them spoke. Both stared down into the forest. Both were silent as though never a thought existed between them.

It was she at last who broke the silence. Never looking at him, but keeping her eyes fixed before her, she asked him straightly whether anything had happened between himself and Jonathan.

"What makes you think that?" he inquired, guardedly.

"Well, your manner to each other has changed

so much in the last few days. Hearing you talk, seeing you in each other's company, no one would ever suppose you had been friends; certainly not the very close friends I know you really are."

"What do you imagine could have happened in a deserted place like this?" he asked her, determined it should be she, and not he, who of them two should first speak the meaning of their mind.

"I've tried so hard to think," she replied.

"Well, with what result?"

"Sometimes I've thought you have both been fretting so terribly at being kept here, prisoners on this coast, that you've lost the sense of friendship, lost the sense of everything in the bitterness of the shackles you find around your lives."

"And at other times?" he prompted her.

"Yes—then at other times——" And here, stammering a word or two almost incoherently, at last she broke down. Her lips were quivering, and she turned to him pathetically, reduced at length to the utmost simplicity of her confession.

"You know what I'm thinking, David. I know you know. And I want you to say it's been no fault of mine. I—I haven't meant it to be. I—I couldn't help it." With an absurdly simple and almost childish gurgling in her throat, she said then: "I haven't used those—those petals at all for quite a long, long time."

He covered his face fiercely with his hands.

"My God!" he exclaimed, wildly. "For Heaven's sake don't talk like that! Don't say ridiculous things like that. That sort of regard of it would bowl me right out. Let's be hard and matter-of-fact, if we're going to be anything at all. That's the only way I could stand it."

So it was again that they sat for another while in silence, David with his knuckles against his teeth, listening to the sound of her quick indrawn breaths and not daring to look at her while she struggled with her tears, scarcely daring to move lest even in the relaxation of his tensity emotions should get the better of him and leap beyond his control.

There was apparently in his conception of it all an odd sense of honour attached. Weeping as she was and in that stress of mind when she might have found some sense of comfort in his arms, he yet could not bring himself to touch even her hand, because he felt it due to Jonathan until by the test it was proved which of them had the right.

He waited therefore until she spoke again, trusting no sound of words on his own lips, listening with fear even to the sound of his own breathing.

Presently she was quieter and he knew she had got her tears in check. Then she said:—

"What are you both going to do?"

Simple as that question was, however, it was too direct to be straightly answered. David paused before he replied, and then he said:—

"What is there to do? What can we do? I suppose—he hasn't told me so—that Jonathan's hit as hard as I am. I might answer that question by asking what you're going to do. But I expect you know well enough by this time that whatever you said wouldn't make much difference to the one who was cut out—there's no chance for him to fling out into life and go to the devil if his inclinations took him that way. There's not even the devil to go to here. We're up against life without any of the alluring attractions of good or evil. The good is for the man who can get it—the evil, what's left for the other man to take. That's the gist of it all. Besides, even if we could, do you think we'd put you in the invidious position of damning one or the other? If the hope I've got in my heart is a true one, you're not really in love with either of us."

"How did you know that?" she muttered, as though he had stolen something from her she had scarcely known she possessed.

"I didn't know it," he admitted, candidly. "That's what I've hoped; what, despite all those moments when you've shown preference for Jonathan, I've forced myself to believe. What is more, I hoped for your sake as well as ours that you won't know till such a moment as when there is no question of choice."

So swiftly did she seize upon this, that he realized, but when it was too late, how he had committed himself.

"What do you mean by that?" she asked, and said it again before she had given him time to reply—"What do you mean by that?"

"No particular meaning one way or another," he replied, evasively, but she would not let it go at that, pressing him with nervous determination for an answer.

"I had no meaning," he said, at last, in a tone of voice strained with the persistence of her questioning.

And then it was her mind leapt with its intuition to the truth.

"You're going to fight," she said, hoarsely. "What you said that day in the forest—brute force—that was the deciding factor. You're going to fight. Oh, my God! This is horrible. I wish I'd never been born. This is making life hideous, and it can't be as hideous as all that."

"There isn't anything hideous about it," David replied, quietly. "In the back of our hearts, I believe we're both longing for the moment to come, to get at it and settle it once and for all. We fought when we were kids at school. Why shouldn't we fight now?"

"Yes—you were boys then. You're men now. Oh—I think it's horrible! Why can't we all be friends, as we were at first?"

At that moment David felt he could take her hand. He laid his own upon it and pressed his fingers firmly round her own.

"You know that's impossible," said he. "Don't you remember? The meaning of life? There's only meaning in friendship when you've known what love is. For God's sake, don't let's talk about it. It's talking about it makes it horrible."

"Nevertheless, if you care for me as much as you say you do," she cried, "promise me—promise me you won't fight."

She was clinging to him then, both hands on his shoulders and her head bent in weeping on her breast.

Failing in being able to make that promise, he evaded the difficulty of denying her anything, by asking her why she should want to extract it from him.

"Don't you realize," he said, taking her hands from his shoulders—"don't you realize that it will make it easier for you in the long run? You can't get merely friendship from either of us. You've got to put that out of your head. You can't shield yourself behind all the social palisades civilization erects for such a purpose at home. You're at the mercy of life and so are we. So it'll be much easier for you when it's all over. You're not in love with either of us—but——" He paused.

"But what?" said she.

"Are you going to hate me for saying this?"

"I'm not in the mood to hate anybody or anything. I feel all numbed. Say it—say it. What is it?"

"Well—you *are* in love," said he.

She stared at him, almost frightened at his perception. "What do you mean?" she muttered.

"You are in love," he repeated. "It's in the air, and the air's full of it. Do you imagine people's thoughts and passions and emotions, as concentrated and uninterrupted as ours, don't carry contagion with them? Ideas are fevers, and when they're strong enough, and free enough, without all the counter-irritants of little social habits and customs, do you imagine there is any mind can stand against them without falling a victim? Did your constitution stand up against the fever in the atmosphere all about that swamp? Can your mind stand up against this? War is a fever, the fever of a predominating idea. It's an epidemic, a foul disease, and whole nations get swept by its contagion. And this—this is more virulent and stronger even than war. If England were at war, wouldn't you wish us, both strong men, to go out and fight for our country? Why, then, should you so hate the idea of our fighting for something which, in a situation such as this, is dearer even than his country is to a man?"

"I hate war and I hate this," she replied, fiercely. "Every woman hates war. Every woman would hate this, who was not infatuated with her own conceit."

"But until civilization like the Gospel has been preached to all the world, you must have war—the war of aggression from those who are not civilized and the war of defence from those who are. Whole nations can be infatuated with their own conceit and they won't hate war."

"But surely to God," she cried, "we are civilized, you and Jonathan and I! We—we don't want to settle this by brutal methods like that!"

"You admit it needs settlement," he said, quickly. "You admit that, and so you admit the truth of what I said. You *are* in love, and only some form of settlement will show you the right of one of us to claim you. He's the one you'll love—the one who's master—master of you as well as master of the situation as it stands."

"Yes—but how—how will you fight—just—just with your fists—like—like they do in the prize fights?"

He could not help laughing at her feminine anxieties, and with them all, the still more feminine curiosity that lay beneath.

"I will know—I must know!" she exclaimed, passionately. "What are you going to do? Isn't that the very first question I asked you—what *are* you going to do?"

He sat silent, refusing to answer her, and then, with a sudden impulse of fear, she seized his hand.

"He'll kill you, David," she whispered, and then he realized how well she must have learnt, in those ten days of his sickness, the depth of Jonathan's passion for her. But more than this he realized, which, in that moment, came as a sickness of fear into his mind. She counted upon the certainty of Jonathan's success.

"Have you any reason to be as certain as all that?" said he.

"Do you mean to say you don't realize it?" she said, softly, as though he were a child and she were teaching him a lesson it was expedient he should learn. "David—that leopard the other day. He killed it with his hands—with his hands—that thing which had no thought but to kill him and with weapons in its talons and strength in its body that you—David—can't you see? He killed it. He's as strong as a lion, that man. Haven't you seen the muscles in his arms as he works. And—and there's nothing he can't do with his hands. Oh—can't you see, you haven't got a chance? For God's sake don't fight, David. Think, if he killed you, what we should feel, here alone; what he'd feel most of all, because he'd killed the best friend he had in the world!"

"Let's get back to the beach," said David. "It's not a bit of good sitting on here and talking. Supposing he did kill that leopard the other day, the instincts of life it fought with are governed to a certain extent by fear. There's not a question of fear in this. I'm not afraid of losing you. I haven't got you yet. But, my God, I'm going to have an infernally good try."

(To be concluded.)

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

427.—THE SMUGGLERS' WINE.

AMONG the contraband goods landed by some smugglers were some bottles of wine. On examination they found that they had brought ashore seven quart bottles and seven pint bottles of wine, and five empty quart and five empty pint bottles. The puzzle is to

show how they could make a fair and equitable division so that each received the same quantity of wine and the same number of bottles of each size. No wine is to be poured from one bottle to another. If you find the correct solution it will tell you just how many smugglers there must have been in the band.

428.—SIMPLE DIVISION.

THIS is a puzzle about which I am always receiving inquiries :—

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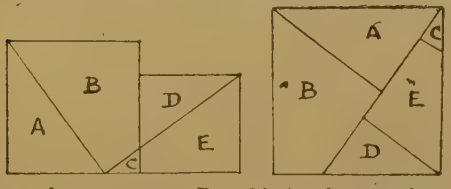
It was a simple division sum. Can you restore it by substituting a figure for every asterisk, without altering or removing the sevens? If you start out, as I did, with the assumption that all the sevens are given and that you must not use another, you will attempt an impossibility, though the proof is difficult; but when you are told that though no additional seven may be used in divisor, dividend, or quotient, any number of extra sevens may be used in the working, it is comparatively easy, if you have a clear head and reason the thing out. It can then be solved at a short sitting.

429.—TWO SQUARES IN ONE.

READERS of these pages are well aware that two squares of any relative sizes can be cut into five pieces, in the manner shown below, that will fit together and



form a larger square. But this involves cutting the smaller square. Can you show an easy method of doing it without in any way cutting the smaller square?

430.—AN OLD ENIGMA.

HERE is an enigma that has been going the rounds for years. The solution is said to be lost, and I am not aware that any answer has ever been suggested. As a correspondent now asks my assistance, I submit the puzzle to my readers. I think I have just hit on the correct solution, and will give it next month.

A headless man had a letter to write;
He who read it had lost his sight;
The dumb repeated it word for word;
And deaf was he who listened and heard.

431.—THE DIGITS AND SQUARE.

PLACE any one of the nine digits in the central square. Now fill up the remaining eight squares with the eight digits left, beginning at any square you like, but placing them round the figure in order of value. When this is done the number in the bottom row must be the sum of the two numbers in the rows above. Thus, in square A the 6 has been selected for the centre, and the other figures are correctly placed in order, but the addition is not correct. In the case B the addition is correct, but the numbers are not written round the square in their regular order of value. Can you find the correct solution? It is quite easy. Of course, you can write the numbers in either direction round the square.

A

1	9	8
2	6	7
3	4	5

B

2	8	3
1	7	6
4	5	9

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

422.—ECONOMY IN STRING.

THE total length of string that passes along the length, breadth, or depth must in every case be the same to allow of the maximum dimensions—that is, 4ft. When the reader is told this, or has found it for himself (and I regret that I have not the space to give the proof), the rest is exceedingly easy. For the string passes 2 times along length, 4 times along breadth, and 6 times along depth. Therefore 4ft. divided by 2, 4, and 6 will give us 2ft., 1ft., and ⅔ft. respectively for the length, breadth, and depth of the largest possible parcel.

423.—MISSING WORDS.

THE words in their order are INLETS, SILENT, LISTEN, ENLIST, and TINSEL.

424.—THE SIX NOUGHTS.

100
330
505
077
099

IIII

425.—AN OLD THREE-MOVER.

1. K—K 2 K—Kt 6
2. Q—Q 2 K—R 5
3. Q—Kt 4 (mate)

2. . . . . K—B 5
3. Q—Q 3 (mate)

426.—THE PRINTER'S PROBLEM.

THE printer must have purchased the following twenty-seven types: A A B C D E E E F G H I J L M N O O P R R S T U U V Y.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for November, 1918.

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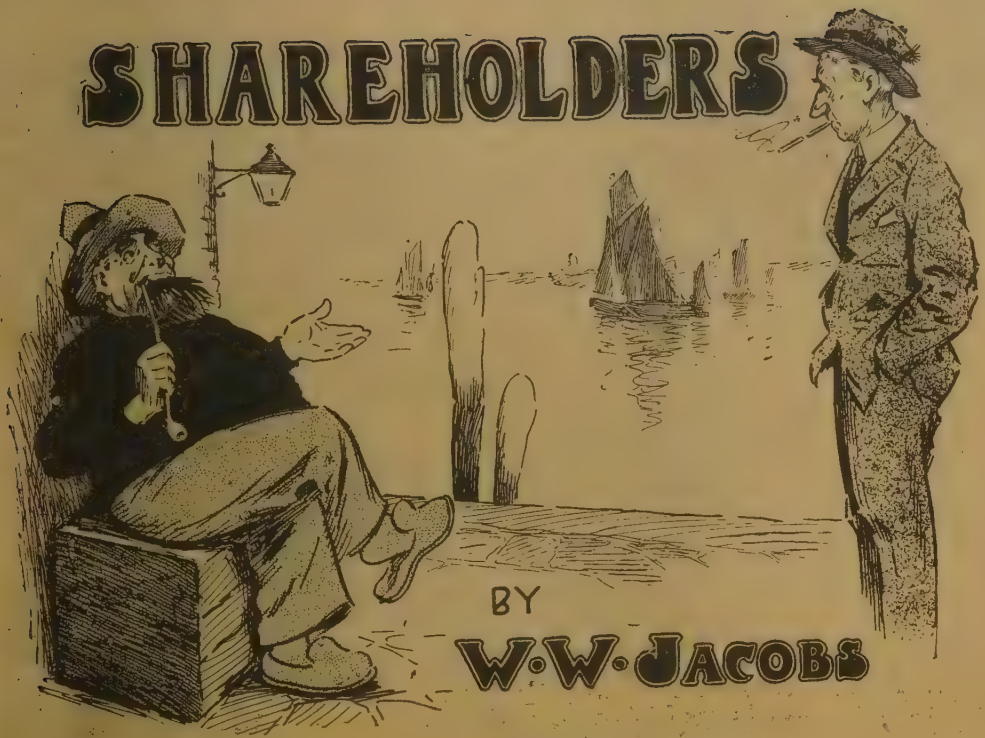
"HE GOT SOME OF 'IS MONEY FROM HIS LANDLADY AT EIGHT O'CLOCK, ARTER LISTENING TO 'ER FOR 'ARF AN HOUR, AND THEN HE 'AD TO PICK IT UP OFF OF THE FLOOR, AND SAY 'THANK YOU' FOR IT."

(*See page* 309.)

SHAREHOLDERS



Illustrated by Will Owen.

A SAILORMAN—said the night-watchman, musingly—a sailorman is like a fish, he is safest when 'e is at sea. When a fish comes ashore it is in for trouble, and so is a sailorman. One poor chap I knew 'ardly ever came ashore without getting married; and when he was found out there was no less than six wimmen in the court all taking away 'is character at once. And when he spoke up about Solomon the magistrate pretty near bit 'is 'ead off.

Then look at the trouble they get in with their money! They come ashore from a long trip, smelling of it a'most, and they go from port to port like a lord. Everybody has got their eye on that money—everybody except the sailorman, that is—and afore he knows wot's 'appened, and who 'as got it, he's looking for a ship agin. When he ain't robbed of 'is money, he wastes it; and when 'e don't do either, he loses it.

I knew one chap who hid 'is money. He'd been away ten months, and, knowing 'ow easy money goes, 'e made up sixteen pounds in a nice little parcel and hid it where nobody could find it. That's wot he said, and p'r'aps 'e was right. All I know is, *he* never found it. I did the same thing myself once with a couple o' quid I ran acrost unexpected, on'y, unfortunately for me, I hid it just afore my missus started 'er spring-cleaning.

One o' the worst men I ever knew for getting into trouble when he came ashore was old Sam Small. If he couldn't find it by 'imself, Ginger Dick and Peter Russet would help 'im look for it. Generally speaking they found it without straining their eyesight.

I remember one time they was home, arter being away pretty near a year, and when they was paid off they felt like walking gold-mines. They went about smiling all over with good-temper and 'appiness, and for the first three days they was like brothers. That didn't last, of course, and on the fourth day Sam Small, arter saying wot 'e would do to Ginger and Peter if it wasn't for the police, went off by 'imself.

His temper passed off arter a time, and 'e began to look cheerful again. It was a lovely morning, and, having nothing to do and plenty in 'is pocket to do it with, he went along like a schoolboy with a 'arf holiday.

He went as far as Stratford on the top of a tram for a mouthful o' fresh air, and came back to his favourite coffee-shop with a fine appetite for dinner. There was a very nice gentlemanly chap sitting opposite 'im, and the way he begged Sam's pardon for splashing gravy over 'im made Sam take a liking to him at once. Nicely dressed he was, with a gold pin in 'is tie, and a fine gold watch-chain acrost his weskit; and Sam could see he 'ad been brought up well by the way he used 'is knife and fork. He kept looking at Sam in a thoughtful kind o' way, and at last he said wot a beautiful morning it was, and wot

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a fine day it must be in the country. In a little while they began to talk like a couple of old friends, and he told Sam all about 'is father, wot was a clergyman in the country, and Sam talked about a father of his as was living private on three 'undred a year.

"Ah, money's a useful thing," ses the man.

"It ain't everything," ses Sam. "It won't give you 'appiness. I've run through a lot in my time, so I ought to know."

"I expect you've got a bit left, though," ses the man, with a wink.

Sam laughed and smacked 'is pocket. "I've got a trifle to go on with," he ses, winking back. "I never feel comfortable without a pound or two in my pocket."

"You look as though you're just back from a vy'ge," ses the man, looking at 'im very hard.

"I am," ses Sam, nodding. "Just back arter ten months, and I'm going to spend a bit o' money afore I sign on agin, I can tell you."

"That's wot it was given to us for," ses the man, nodding at him.

They both got up to go at the same time and walked out into the street together, and, when Sam asked 'im whether he might have the pleasure of standing 'im a drink, he said he might. He talked about the different kinds of drink as they walked along till Sam, wot was looking for a high-class pub, got such a raging thirst on 'im he hardly knew wot to do with 'imself. He passed several pubs, and walked on as fast as he could to the Three Widders.

"Do you want to go in there partikler?" ses the man, stopping at the door.

"No," ses Sam, staring.

"'Cos I know a place where they sell the best glass o' port wine in London," ses the man.

He took Sam up two or three turnings, and then led him into a quiet little pub in a back street. There was a cosy little saloon-bar with nobody in it, and, arter Sam had 'ad two port wines for the look of the thing, he 'ad a pint o' six-ale because he liked it. His new pal had one too, and he 'ad just taken a pull at it and wiped his mouth, when 'e noticed a little bill pinned up at the back of the bar.

"Lost, between—the Mint and—Tower Stairs," he ses, leaning forward and reading very slow, "a gold—locket—set with—diamonds. Whoever will—return—the same to—Mr. Smith—Orange Villa—Barnet—will receive—thirty pounds—reward."

"'Ow much?" ses Sam, starting.

"Thirty pounds," ses the man. "Must be a good locket. Where'd you get that?" he ses, turning to the barmaid.

"Gentleman came in an hour ago," ses the gal, "and, arter he had 'ad two or three drinks with the guv'nor, he asks 'im to stick it up. 'Arf crying he was—said it 'ad belonged to his old woman."

She went off to serve a customer at the other end of the bar wot was making little dents in it with his pot, and the man came back and sat down by Sam agin, and began to talk about horse-racing. At least, he tried to, but Sam couldn't talk of nothing but that locket, and wot a nice steady sailorman could do with thirty pounds.

"Well, p'r'aps you'll find it," ses the man, chaffing-like. "'Ave another pint."

Sam had one, but it only made 'im more solemn, and he got in quite a temper as 'e spoke about casuals loafing about on Tower Hill with their 'ands in their pockets, and taking gold lockets out of the mouths of hard-working sailormen.

"It mightn't be found yet," ses the man, speaking thoughtful-like. "It's wonderful how long a thing'll lay sometimes. Wot about going and 'aving a look for it?"

Sam shook his 'ead at fust, but arter turning the thing over in his mind, and 'aving another look at the bill, and copying down the name and address for luck, 'e said p'r'aps they might as well walk that way as anywhere else.

"Something seems to tell me we've got a chance," ses the man, as they stepped outside. "It's a funny feeling and I can't explain it, but it always means good luck. Last time I had it an aunt o' mine swallered 'er false teeth and left me five 'undred pounds."

"There's aunts and aunts," ses Sam, grunting. "I 'ad one once, but if she had swallered *'er* teeth she'd ha' been round to me to help 'er buy some new ones. That's the sort *she* was."

"Mind!" ses the man, patting 'im on the shoulder, "if we do find this, I don't want any of it. I've got all I want. It's all for you."

They went on like a couple o' brothers arter that, especially Sam, and when they got to the Mint they walked along slow down Tower Hill looking for the locket. It was awkward work, because, if people saw them looking about, they'd 'ave started looking too, and twice Sam nearly fell over owing to walking like a man with a stiff neck and squinting down both sides of his nose at once. When they got as far as the Stairs they came back on the other side of the road, and they 'ad turned to go back agin when a docker-looking chap stopped Sam's friend and spoke to 'im.

"I've got no change, my man," ses Sam's pal, pushing past him.

"I ain't begging, guv'nor," ses the chap, follering 'im up. "I'm trying to sell something."

"Wot is it?" ses the other, stopping.

The man looked up and down the street, and then he put his 'ead near them and whispered.

"Eh?" ses Sam's pal.

"Something I picked up," ses the man, still a-whispering.

Sam got a pinch on the arm from 'is pal that nearly made him scream, then they both stood still, staring at the docker.

"Wot is it?" ses Sam, at last.

The docker looked over his shoulder agin, and then 'e put his 'and in his trouser-pocket and just showed 'em a big, fat gold locket with diamonds stuck all over it. Then he shoved it back in 'is pocket, while Sam's pal was giving 'im a pinch worse than wot the other was.

"It's the one," he ses, in a whisper. "Let's 'ave another look at it," he ses to the docker.

The man fished it out of his pocket agin, and held on to it tight while they looked at it.

"Where did you find it?" ses Sam.

"Found it over there, just by the Mint," ses the man, pointing.

"Wot d'ye want for it?" ses Sam's pal.

"As much as I can get," ses the man. "I don't quite know 'ow much it's worth, that's

"'FOUND IT OVER THERE, JUST BY THE MINT,' SES THE MAN, POINTING."

the worst of it. Wot d'ye say to twenty pounds, and chance it?"

Sam laughed—the sort of laugh a pal 'ad once give him a black eye for.

"Twenty pounds!" he ses; "twenty pounds! 'Ave you gorn out of your mind, or wot? I'll give you a couple of quid for it."

"Well, it's all right, captin," ses the man, "there's no 'arm done. I'll try somebody else—or p'r'aps there'll be a big reward for it. I don't believe it was bought for a *'undred pounds.*"

He was just sheering off when Sam's pal caught 'im by the arm and asked him to let 'im have another look at it. Then he came back to Sam and led 'im a little way off, whispering to 'im that it was the chance of a lifetime.

"And if you prefer to keep it for a little while and then sell it, instead of getting the reward for it, I dare say it would be worth a hundred pounds to you," 'e ses.

"I ain't got twenty pounds," ses Sam.

"'Ow much 'ave you got?" ses his pal.

Sam felt in 'is pockets, and the docker came up and stood watching while he counted it. Altogether it was nine pounds fourteen shillings and tuppence.

"P'r'aps you've got some more at 'ome," ses his pal.

"Not a farthing," ses Sam, which was true as far as the farthing went.

"Or p'r'aps you could borrer some," ses his pal, in a soft, kind voice. "I'd lend it to you with pleasure, on'y I haven't got it with me."

Sam shook his 'ead, and at last, arter the docker 'ad said he wouldn't let it go for less than twenty, even to save 'is life, he let it go for the nine pounds odd, a silver watch-chain, two cigars wot Sam 'ad been sitting on by mistake, and a sheath-knife.

"Shove it in your pocket and don't let a soul see it," ses the man, handing over the locket. "I might as well give it away a'most. But it can't be 'elped."

He went off up the 'Ill shaking his 'ead, and Sam's pal, arter watching him for a few seconds, said good-bye in a hurry and went off arter 'im to tell him to keep 'is mouth shut about it.

Sam walked back to his lodgings on air, as the saying is, and even did a little bit of a skirt-dance to a pianner-organ wot was playing. Peter and Ginger was out, and so was his landlady, a respectable woman as was minding the rest of 'is money for him, and when he asked 'er little gal, a kid of eleven, to trust 'im for some tin she gave 'im a lecture on wasting his money instead wot took 'is breath away—all but a word or two.

He got some of 'is money from his landlady at eight o'clock, arter listening to 'er for 'arf an hour, and then he 'ad to pick it up off of the floor, and say "Thank you" for it.

He went to bed afore Ginger and Peter came in, but 'e was so excited he couldn't sleep, and long arter they was in bed he laid there and thought of all the different ways of spending a 'undred pounds. He kept taking the locket from under 'is piller and feeling it; then he felt 'e must 'ave another look at it, and arter coughing 'ard two or three times and calling out to the other two not to snore—to see if they was awake—he got out o' bed and lit the candle. Ginger and Peter was both fast asleep, with their eyes screwed up and their mouths wide open, and 'e sat on the bed and looked at the locket until he was a'most dazzled.

"'Ullo, Sam!" ses a voice. "Wot 'ave you got there?"

Sam nearly fell off the bed with surprise and temper. Then 'e hid the locket in his 'and and blew out the candle.

"Who gave it to you?" ses Ginger.

"You get off to sleep, and mind your own bisness," ses Sam, grinding 'is teeth.

He got back into bed agin and laid there listening to Ginger waking up Peter. Peter woke up disagreeable, but when Ginger told 'im that Sam 'ad stole a gold locket as big as a saucer, covered with diamonds, he altered 'is mind.

"Let's 'ave a look at it," he ses, sitting up.

"Ginger's dreaming," ses Sam, in a shaky voice. "I ain't got no locket. Wot d'you think I want a locket for?"

Ginger got out o' bed and lit the candle agin. "Come on!" he ses, "let's 'ave a look at it. I wasn't dreaming. I've been awake all the time, watching you."

Sam shut 'is eyes and turned his back to them.

"He's gone to sleep, poor old chap," ses Ginger. "We'll 'ave a look at it without waking 'im. You take that side, Peter! Mind you don't disturb 'im."

He put his 'and in under the bed-clo'es and felt all up and down Sam's back, very careful. Sam stood it for 'arf a minute, and then 'e sat up in bed and behaved more like a windmill than a man.

"Hold his 'ands," ses Ginger.

"Hold 'em yourself," ses Peter, dabbing 'is nose with his shirt-sleeve.

"Well, we're going to see it," ses Ginger, "if we have to make enough noise to rouse the 'ouse. Fust of all we're going to ask you perlite; then we shall get louder and louder. *Show us the locket wot you stole, Sam!*"

"Show—us—the—diamond locket!" ses Peter.

"It's my turn, Peter," ses Ginger. "One, two, three. SHOW—US—TH'——"

"Shut up," ses Sam, trembling all over. "I'll show it to you if you stop your noise."

He put his 'and under his piller, but afore he showed it to 'em he sat up in bed and made 'em a little speech. He said 'e never wanted to see their faces agin as long as he lived, and why Ginger's mother 'adn't put 'im in a pail o' cold water when 'e was born 'e couldn't understand. He said 'e didn't believe that even a mother could love a baby that looked like a red-'aired cod-fish, and as for Peter Russet, 'e believed *his* mother died of fright.

"That'll do," ses Ginger, as Sam stopped to get 'is breath. "Are you going to show us the locket, or 'ave we got to shout agin?"

Sam swallered something that nearly choked 'im, and then he opened his 'and and showed it to them. Peter told 'im to wave it so as they could see the diamonds flash, and then Ginger waved the candle to see 'ow they looked that way, and pretty near set poor Sam's whiskers on fire.

They didn't leave 'im alone till they knew as much about it as he could tell 'em, and they both of 'em told 'im that if he took a reward of thirty pounds for it, instead of selling it for a 'undred, he was a bigger fool than he looked.

"I shall turn it over in my mind," ses Sam, sucking 'is teeth. "When I want your advice I'll ask you for it."

"We wasn't thinking of you," ses Ginger; "we was thinking of ourselves."

"'HOLD HIS 'ANDS,' SES GINGER. 'HOLD 'EM YOURSELF,' SES PETER, DABBING 'IS NOSE WITH HIS SHIRT-SLEEVE."

"*You!*" ses Sam, with a bit of a start. "Wot's it got to do with you?"

"Our share'll be bigger, that's all," ses Ginger.

"Much bigger," ses Peter. "I couldn't dream of letting it go at thirty. It's chucking money away. Why, we might get *two* 'undred for it. Who knows?"

Sam sat on the edge of 'is bed like a man in a dream, then 'e began to make a noise like a cat with a fish-bone in its throat, and then 'e stood up and let fly.

"Don't stop 'im, Peter," ses Ginger. "Let 'im go on; it'll do him good."

"He's forgot all about that penknife you picked up and went shares in," ses Peter. "I wouldn't be mean for *twenty* lockets."

"Nor me neither," ses Ginger. "But we won't let 'im be mean—for 'is own sake. We'll 'ave our rights."

"Rights!" ses Sam. "Rights! You didn't find it."

"We always go shares if we find anything," ses Ginger. "Where's your memory, Sam?"

"But I didn't find it," ses Sam.

"No, you bought it," ses Peter, "and if you don't go shares we'll split on you—see? Then you can't sell it anyway, and perhaps you won't even get the reward. We can be at Orange Villa as soon as wot you can."

"Sooner," ses Ginger, nodding. "But there's no need to do that. If 'e don't go shares I'll slip round to the police-station fust thing in the morning."

"You know the way there all right," ses Sam, very bitter.

"And we don't want none o' your back-answers," ses Ginger. "Are you going shares or not?"

"Wot about the money I paid for it?" ses Sam, "and my trouble?"

Ginger and Peter sat down on the bed to talk it over, and at last, arter calling themselves a lot o' bad names for being too kind-'earted, they offered 'im five pounds each for their share in the locket.

"And that means you've got your share for next to nothing, Sam," ses Ginger.

"Some people wouldn't 'ave given you anything," ses Peter.

Sam gave way at last, and then 'e stood by making nasty remarks while Ginger wrote out a paper for them all to sign, because he said he had known Sam such a long time.

It was a'most daylight afore they got to sleep, and then the first thing Ginger did when he woke was to wake Sam up, and offer to shake 'ands with him. The noise woke Peter up, and, as Sam wouldn't shake 'ands with 'im either, they both patted him on the back instead.

They made him take 'em to the little pub, arter breakfast, to read the bill about the reward. Sam didn't mind going, as it 'appened, as he 'oped to meet 'is new pal there and tell 'im his troubles, but, though they stayed there some time, 'e didn't turn up. He wasn't at the coffee-shop for dinner, neither.

Peter and Ginger was in 'igh spirits, and, though Sam told 'em plain that he would sooner walk about with a couple of real pickpockets, they wouldn't leave 'im an inch.

"Anybody could steal it off of you, Sam," ses Ginger, patting 'im on the weskit to make sure the locket was still there. "It's a good job you've got us to look arter you."

"We must buy 'im a money-belt with a pocket in it," ses Peter.

Ginger nodded at 'im. "Yes," he ses, "that would be safer. And he'd better wear it next to 'is skin, with everything over it. I should feel more comfortable then."

"And wot about me?" ses Sam, turning on 'im.

"Well, we'll take it in turns," ses Ginger. "You one day, and then me, and then Peter."

Sam gave way at last, as arter all he could see it was the safest thing to do, but he 'ad so much to say about it that they got fair sick of the sound of 'is voice. They 'ad to go 'ome for 'im to put the belt on; and then at seven o'clock in the evening, arter Sam had 'ad two or three pints, they had to go 'ome agin, as he was complaining of tight-lacing.

Ginger had it on next day and he went 'ome five times. The other two went with 'im in case he lost 'imself, and stood there making nasty remarks while he messed 'imself up with a penn'orth of cold cream. It was a 'cheap belt, and pore Ginger said that, when they 'ad done with it, it would come in handy for sand-paper.

Peter didn't like it any better than the other two did, and twice they 'ad to speak to 'im about stopping in the street and trying to make 'imself more comfortable by wriggling. Sam said people misunderstood it.

Arter that they agreed to wear it outside their shirt, and even then Ginger said it scratched 'im. And every day they got more and more worried about wot was the best thing to do with the locket, and whether it would be safe to try and sell it. The idea o' walking about with a fortune in their pockets that they couldn't spend a'most drove 'em crazy.

"The longer we keep it, the safer it'll be," ses Sam, as they was walking down Hounds-ditch one day.

"We'll sell it when I'm sixty," ses Ginger, nasty-like.

"Then old Sam won't be 'ere to have 'is share," ses Peter.

Sam was just going to answer 'em back, when he stopped and began to smile instead. Straight in front of 'im was the gentleman he 'ad met in the coffee-shop, coming along with another man, and he just 'ad time to see that it was the docker who 'ad sold him the locket, when they both saw 'im. They turned like a flash, and, afore Sam could get 'is breath, bolted up a little alley and disappeared.

"Wot's the row?" ses Ginger, staring.

Sam didn't answer 'im. He stood there struck all of a heap.

"Do you know 'em?" ses Peter.

Sam couldn't answer 'im for a time. He was doing a bit of 'ard thinking.

"'CHAP I 'AD A ROW WITH THE OTHER NIGHT,' HE SES, AT LAST."

"Chap I 'ad a row with the other night," he ses, at last.

He walked on very thoughtful, and the more 'e thought, the less 'e liked it. He was so pale that Ginger thought 'e was ill and advised 'im to 'ave a drop o' brandy. Peter recommended rum, so to please 'em he 'ad both. It brought 'is colour back, but not 'is cheerfulness.

He gave 'em both the slip next morning; which was easy, as Ginger was wearing the locket, and, arter fust 'aving a long ride for nothing owing to getting in the wrong train, he got to Barnet.

It was a big place; big enough to 'ave a dozen Orange Villas, but pore Sam couldn't find one. It wasn't for want of trying neither. He asked at over twenty shops, and the post-office, and even went to the police-station. He must ha' walked six or seven miles looking for it; and at last, 'arf ready to drop, 'e took the train back.

He 'ad some sausages and mashed with a pint o' stout at a place in Bishopsgate, and then 'e started to walk 'ome. The only comfort he 'ad was the thought of the ten pounds Ginger and Peter 'ad paid 'im; and when he remembered that he began to cheer up and even smile. By the time he got 'ome 'e was beaming all over 'is face.

"Where've you been?" ses Ginger.

"Enjoying myself by myself," ses Sam.

"Please yourself," ses Peter, very severe, "but where'd you ha' been if we 'ad sold the locket and skipped, eh?"

"You wouldn't 'ave enjoyed yourself by yourself then," ses Ginger. "Yes, you may laugh!"

Sam didn't answer 'im, but he sat down on 'is bed and 'is shoulders shook till Ginger lost his temper and gave him a couple o' thumps on the back that pretty near broke it.

"All right," ses Sam, very firm. "Now you 'ave done for yourselves. I 'ad a'most made up my mind to go shares; now you sha'n't 'ave a ha'penny."

Ginger laughed then. "Ho!" he ses, "and 'ow are you going to prevent it?"

"We've got the locket, Sam," ses Peter, smiling and shaking his 'ead at 'im.

"And will mind it till it's sold," ses Ginger.

Sam laughed agin, short and nasty. Then he undressed 'imself very slow and got into bed. At twelve o'clock, just as Ginger was dropping off, he began to laugh agin, and 'e only stopped when 'e heard Ginger getting out of bed to 'im.

He stayed in bed next morning, 'cos he said 'is sides was aching, but 'e laughed agin as they was going out, and when they came back he 'ad gorn.

We never know 'ow much we like anything till we lose it. A week arterwards, as Ginger was being 'elped out of a pawnshop by Peter, he said 'e would give all he 'adn't got for the locket to be near enough to Sam to hear 'im laugh agin.

LIEUTENANT HENRI FARRÉ.

A PAINTER OF AIR-BATTLES.

The Remarkable Work of Lieutenant Farré.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER A. JULEY.

THE French Military Mission to the United States has, among other interesting and unique projects, been supervising a very remarkable exhibition of aviation pictures by Lieutenant Henri Farré, a graduate of the famous École des Beaux Arts, and a pupil of Gustave Moreau. These paintings are being shown in every big city in America, and the proceeds of the exhibition are to go to the children of French aviators killed in action. When everyone in the United States has had an opportunity of seeing these striking and realistic portrayals of actual aerial combats they will be taken to Canada, and then shipped back to Europe and, we hope, to London, where they will continue to draw many more thousands of those who can admire great deeds even though they may not be able to take part in them. We are glad to be able to show our readers some of these great paintings in advance.

A month before the Great War broke out Henri Farré was in Buenos Aires painting portraits of wealthy South Americans. He was then forty-three years of age, and if anyone had told him that in less than three months he would be in his own country fighting against a ruthless destroyer of the world's peace he would have laughed at what he considered a very good joke. He was not a soldier but a painter, and had been an exhibitor at the Salon every year consecutively from 1896 to that which saw the beginning of the world's greatest conflict. He had been awarded the Gold Medal at the Salon, and his highest ambition was to continue his art work until the day came when he would put away his brush for ever. But, instead, the war came and Farré never hesitated. He at once offered his services to France, and was assigned to the artillery and became an observer. When General Niox, Governor of the Invalides and Director of the French Army Museum, heard that Farré had become an air fighter, he named him a Delegate from the Army Museum, which gave him the privilege of practising his art at the Front.

It was not long before Lieutenant Farré was promoted to the rank of Observer-Bombardier, and assigned to the 1st Groupe d'Escadrille de Bombardement. This group, unlike most of the aviation units of the French army, is not attached to any division or corps, but is under the direct orders of the General Staff, and is sent to whatever part of the Front it may be needed. It is due to this fact that Lieutenant Farré has been enabled to fly over all parts of the line, and has had the unique experience of taking an active part in practically all the great raids over German cities and munition centres, such as Karlsruhe, Dieuze, and Metz.

"All my paintings have been made," Lieutenant Farré said recently, "at such times as I could snatch a brush instead of dropping a bomb." But in spite of this they are absolutely accurate, even to the smallest detail. And this is not surprising, seeing they were done under the very eyes of the heroes whose exploits they depict, and were criticized by what might without exaggeration be called a committee of experts.

These paintings are not only valuable as works of art, but as historical documents they are unique. Many of the incidents they represent are thrilling in the extreme. "The pictures are pioneers in a new field," says a well-known art critic. "Light effects are not the same a mile above-ground as they are on the surface. Distance and perspective are distorted. Action and brilliant colouring are the prime characteristics

1. BOMBARDMENT OF THE TOWN OF KARLSRUHE, WHICH IS DEPICTED AS SEEN BY THE AVIATOR AT A HEIGHT OF FOUR THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED FEET.

of this new aerial art." Hence, no artist, however supreme in his own particular line, could hope to be a successful painter of events above the clouds unless he was also a practical aviator. It may therefore be conceded that when the war is over the only authentic pictorial representations of these thrilling aerial activities will be those made by Lieutenant Henri Farré.

In explaining his methods of how he combined aviation and painting Lieutenant Farré said: "It is impossible, of course, for any artist to make sketches while flying at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, with anti-aircraft shells bursting about him and a dozen death-dealing bombs resting at his feet. So I was under the necessity of devising a sort of stenographic method of noting colour values and combinations. I made mental notes as I flew, and then put my pictures on canvas before these memories faded. Many of the battles in the air which I have depicted I was fortunate enough to witness myself, and in others I was still more fortunate actually to take part. I have had two kinds of luck—the luck of the aviator and the luck of the artist. I am supremely grateful for both."

Lieutenant Farré enjoys the distinction of being Official Painter to the French Army and Navy. During two and a half years he never left his comrades in aviation, sharing their sufferings and misfortunes, listening to their conversations and discussions, and thus forming his mind and thoroughly learning the science of flying. "At the same time," he said, "I was painting the portraits of these heroes and making pictures of their machines. All the works that I now have the honour of exhibiting were not only painted, but lived by me in the different fronts of France where I was sent by the War Office. I have, therefore, participated in night and day raids in aircraft of every type, and, as you well know, there have been many changes since the beginning of the war. It was, however, only after five months of constant flying that I was able to transform my way of seeing so as to paint things with an aerial vision, as it were. And in this transformation, it seems to me, a new art has been born, which I hope will be understood by terrestrial spectators."

In viewing these pictures Lieutenant Farré gave some practical advice to visitors which it is not uninteresting to quote. "Aviation in general," he said, "is subject to laws of the atmosphere outside the tactics of warfare, which themselves are often outside the volition of the pilot. I therefore took particular pains not to demand any spectacular flying from my pilots, knowing to what end they might lead us, and since the acrobatics are infrequent they might seem unreal. I therefore beg of all those who view my pictures to put themselves in my position—that is to say, observers in another machine—thereby finding themselves spectators of the different exploits of war aviation."

"The kingdom of the air," he said to his visitors on another occasion, "is vast, since it extends indefinitely, but the extent of our radius of action, while considerable (ascensions of thirty thousand feet altitude have actually been accomplished), is limited on account of the numerous different kinds of clouds that encircle the earth.

Altitudes of five or six miles are an average. Sometimes, before actually arriving in clear air, aviators are obliged to cross banks of clouds seven to eight hundred yards deep, depending upon the ascending force of their apparatus. The drift through the clouds sometimes takes from half to three-quarters of an hour. Frequently, while crossing these cloud-banks, in spite of the instruments on board, the pilot completely loses his sense of the horizontal, and, emerging above the clouds, finds himself flying head downward, a most disagreeable and strange sensation, which it does not take the pilot long to right."

Among the one hundred and seventy-six paintings there are twenty-four portraits, including those of such heroic aviators as Captain George Guynemer, the famous French Ace of Aces, who, before his death in action over the German lines, fought eight hundred battles and brought down seventy-four Boche aeroplanes, of which fifty-four are officially recorded; Captain Roekel, killed on the field of honour; Lieutenant Partridge, a famous night-bombing aviator; Lieutenant Dorme, who brought down twenty-eight Boches in eight months before he himself was beaten; Major Lufbery, Major Thaw, and others.

No part of the service could possibly give an artist greater opportunities to display his particular talent than that devoted to aviation. Thrilling deeds are performed every day, and Lieutenant Farré's greatest difficulty was to choose those events of heroic self-sacrifice and devotion to duty most worthy of permanent record. Perhaps one of the most impressive incidents from an artist's point of view was the tragic return of the body of Captain Fequant, by Sergeant Niox, after a reprisal bombardment of Saarbruck. Returning from a fight with an Aviatik, Captain Fequant was hit in the head by a volley of bullets from the German aviator's gun. While fighting he was standing up, but he dropped on being hit. His body fell partly over the side of the machine, but the pilot held him with a badly-wounded hand, and brought him back to the aviation field from which they had started. So much did this incident impress itself on the mind of Lieutenant Farré that he painted two other pictures illustrative of Captain Fequant's last tragic flight. One was that of the actual battle, and the other shows the moment when the body was being lowered from the aeroplane.

One of the most striking canvases is that showing the bombing of Karlsruhe (1). This bombing was performed by the first group of French bombing escadrilles, composed of twenty Voisin biplanes. Karlsruhe, which is depicted as seen by the aviator at a height of four thousand five hundred feet, is frequented in the summer by the wealthy classes; the Duke of Bavaria has a castle there, and the parks and forests are many miles in extent. This particular raid

2. DESTRUCTION OF DRACHEN BALLOONS OVER THE HEIGHTS OF THE MEUSE.

shown in Lieutenant Farré's picture was made as a reprisal because the Germans had bombed unprotected French cities and killed non-combatants and women and children. The raiding aeroplanes started from Nancy, the machines leaving at daybreak and returning six hours afterwards.

The destruction of Drachen balloons over the heights of the Meuse, on the Verdun front, was another subject which made a strong appeal to the artist (2). The balloons were destroyed by fuses originated by Le Prieur, an inventor who has conceived many clever methods of destroying enemy machines.

Our next reproduction is of particular interest to British readers. It illustrates a remarkable exploit of Captain Bone, a British aviator with many successes to his name. The incident which appealed so strongly to Lieutenant Farré was simple in itself, but carried out with remarkable skill and precision. On perceiving an enemy hydro-aeroplane coming to drop bombs on houses near the shore, Captain Bone gave chase, overtook him, and brought him down in the sea. It is said that Captain Bone's capture was one of the smartest and quickest on record (3).

What incident could possibly fire the genius of a French artist more completely than the destruction of a German submarine by a French hydro-aeroplane? Although Lieutenant Farré was not a witness of the actual occurrence, he learned every detail from the hero who succeeded in accomplishing the remarkable deed, and forthwith produced one of the most thrilling pictures of the entire exhibition (4). The event took place in the North Sea in 1916, and the machine that performed the astonishingly successful *coup* was a French F.B.A. hydro-aeroplane operating from an altitude of about eight thousand feet. As every reader knows, when the sea is calm a submarine is easily visible to an aerial observer. The destruction of this particular submarine was complete. A depth bomb dropped from a height of about three hundred feet struck the submersible a few feet behind the periscope, almost breaking the submarine in two. The explosion raised a column of water to a height of over a hundred and fifty feet, and when the sea calmed down again the pilot had the satisfaction of seeing *débris* and parts of the submarine appear on the surface of the water. In Lieutenant Farré's picture the immense power of one of these depth bombs can be realized. Indeed, the pilot has to be remarkably quick in order to withdraw outside the radius of concussion and thus save his own machine.

3. A BRITISH AVIATOR, PERCEIVING AN ENEMY MACHINE COMING TO DROP BOMBS ON HOUSES NEAR THE SHORE, GAVE CHASE, OVERTOOK HIM, AND BROUGHT HIM DOWN IN THE SEA.

Another interesting hydro-aeroplane canvas is that which shows one of these immense machines while in distress attacked by an enemy land machine (5). The enemy aeroplane in Lieutenant Farré's painting is making circles at a height of two hundred and fifty feet over the pilot of the hydro-aeroplane. His machine-gun having jammed, he has nothing but his revolver with which to defend himself. "Fortunately," said Lieutenant Farré, in describing this picture, "the pilot is a dead shot and a brave man.

4. A FRENCH MACHINE DESTROYING A GERMAN SUBMARINE WITH A DEPTH BOMB.

5. HYDRO-AEROPLANE IN DISTRESS ATTACKED BY AN ENEMY LAND MACHINE.

When a quarter of an hour has passed, the Boche aeroplane fails to return. No doubt he has retreated to dress his wounds! Our valiant pilot, having got rid of the trouble-maker, repairs his motor and returns to the seaport of Dunkirk under his own power. I painted this picture from a description given me by the pilot himself in 1915."

A very daring exploit is illustrated in the last reproduction (6), which shows a Bregeut-Michelin bombing machine returning from its mission and attacked by a German Fokker. Despite his wounds, the pilot continues to keep control of his machine, which, however, drops, despite all his efforts. The enemy aeroplane is close upon his heels. The machine-gunner is prevented (by the propeller in the rear of his own machine) from firing at the pursuing plane, and, realizing that this is his last resort, he leaves his post in the "fuselage," or body of the machine, and, taking his rifle in hand, he climbs out on the left wing of the machine. Then, making a super-human effort, and in spite of the pressure of the wind, he lies prone upon the lower plane, and, incredible as it may seem, from this position he shoots around the propeller and is thus able to defend himself until his return to the French lines. This was one of the most remarkable incidents ever recorded in the history of aviation, and for sheer audacity has probably never been equalled. That it was successful was, of course, due entirely to the iron nerve and cool deliberation of the intrepid pilot.

In the black-and-white reproductions of these aviation pictures much of their beauty is, of course, lost. The colouring, the cloud effects, the brilliancy of the sky, etc., are absent, which detract from the impressiveness of the paintings. However, it is very certain that, sooner or later, these striking canvases will be shown in London, when their beauty may be realized to the full. Lieutenant Farré is at present accompanying his pictures in their tour of the States, and he hopes to return with them to France, where he will again take up his bombs and his brushes and continue his "bit" towards eliminating the Hun and pictorially recording the heroic deeds of the Allied aviators.

6. A BREGEUT-MICHELIN BOMBING MACHINE, RETURNING FROM ITS MISSION, IS ATTACKED BY A GERMAN FOKKER. THE FRENCH PILOT DEFENDS HIMSELF BY CLIMBING OUT ON THE LEFT WING OF HIS MACHINE AND FIRING AT HIS OPPONENT.

The Orchestra of Death

by Ianthe Jerrold

Illustrated by G. Henry Evison

IT was an evening in the end of November and the roadway gleamed in the lamplight under a soft drizzle of rain. A long queue waited at the gallery entrance of the Coliseum, for it was ten minutes before the opening of the doors. By the shining kerb a bent-backed man moved up and down, playing a monotonous melody on a tin whistle, his cap pulled down over his eyes and the collar of his faded coat turned up against the rain. Nobody heeded him.

A small party of young girls wearing munition badges stood in the queue near to the doorway, and there was much laughing and lively talk among them. One of them took a postcard from her handbag and passed it to the friend at her side.

"Mademoiselle José Dessars in 'La Rose de la Syrie,'" she read slowly, as two others peered over her shoulder.

"Yes, that's her; not in this dance, but in the one mother seen her in at the Pavilion. She dances a treat, mother says. . . . No, a kind of dark rose shade and silver shoulder-straps. She was supposed to be a rose in the dance, see. She comes on to-night after Lucy Glynn. Got a penny, Maude?" The whistle-player stood by the kerb diffidently holding out his tattered cap.

A long line of motor-cars stood now before the open doors, and the bright vestibule was full of moving people. A poster on a wooden frame which leaned against the doorway drew the eyes of every passer-by. It was a black sheet of paper lettered in white, and bore the words:—

JOSÉ DESSARS.
Valse Triste.

The doors opened.

"Two by two, please," said the policeman. Slowly the long queue began to move in at the narrow entrance. . . .

Josephine Dessars lay on the bed in her big, untidy room and stared with blank eyes at the shaded lamp on her open desk. She was half-dressed, and the quilt which had covered her had been tossed aside and lay in a heap on the floor. A variety of soft garments hung over the high foot of the bedstead. She held a folded newspaper in her outflung hand.

Her short coarse hair was black against the white pillow, and accentuated the pallor of her small face; her round, dark eyes were purple-ringed, and the upper lids were swollen and reddened. There was on her face no sign of tears, but the look of one who has spent many restless nights and days in an absorbing anxiety of mind.

There was a sharp click, and then the sound of a door being cautiously opened. A tall girl, with a thick knot of dull fair hair, came quietly into the room and shut the door softly behind her. She tip-toed to the side of the bed. Josephine looked up and smiled.

"Oh, you're awake! How's the headache?"

"All right now," said Josephine, and yawned, lifting her small arms above her head. "What's the time, Phyllis, dear?"

"You don't *look* much better," said Phyllis, gravely. "And it's a quarter to seven. I was just going to wake you up. And I've turned your bath on."

"Thank you, Phyllikins." Josephine yawned again and sat up. In spite of her thirty-six years she looked a child as she swung her legs over the side of the high bedstead. She was an unusually small woman, with slender limbs and a narrow, oval face. Her thick hair showed very few lines of grey.

Phyllis, her pupil and protégée, picked up the *Telegraph* from the floor.

"Why, you haven't even unfolded the paper yet—you don't seem to take any interest in anything now. What's the matter with you, José? And you've been looking simply awfully ill the last few days!"

Josephine, thrusting her feet into brocaded slippers, laughed.

"I'm all right, silly child. It's my cold still hanging on, that's all."

"I don't believe you sleep a bit at night, either," said Phyllis, settling herself down on the bed with the air of one determined to argue the matter out. "And you talk in your sleep. Last night I was awake and I could hear you. And what do you think you said? You kept muttering over and over again: 'They're dead; they're all dead.' You kept saying that. It sounded dreadful. Who's dead, Josephine, darling?"

Josephine Dessars laughed nervously.

"Did I say that, dear? How funny! The 'Valse Triste' must be getting on my nerves. But I must hurry up." She flung a dressing-gown around her shoulders and went to the door. "Sort some clothes out for me while I have a bath, there's an angel."

Phyllis sighed, and got up slowly from the bed. To Josephine Dessars, as she went down the brightly-lit passage, the very click of her own heels on the parquet seemed to repeat the words: "They're dead; they're all dead."

Josephine Dessars had danced for nearly thirty years. The daughter of a French circus-rider and a wandering Englishman, she had spent her childhood passing from town to town with her mother's troupe. An elfish and precocious little girl of eight, she had taken her childish part in the acrobatic displays which were a feature of such travelling shows. Later, when she had grown to a graceful girl, she joined a different company and gained a certain reputation in provincial French towns as a ballet-dancer. She had inherited the volatile and adventurous temperament of her father, together with something of the shrewdness of the French bourgeoisie.

So she danced her way from town to town. She had many lovers, for men and women alike fell under the spell of her happy kindness and her soft, slow voice. But she was unemotional and ambitious, and she formed no deep attachments.

She was very happy in those early days.

It was in Vienna, when she was twenty-three, that she committed the one great indiscretion of her life. There she met Otto Geracht. He was an Austrian revolutionary, a dreamer, a fanatic, almost a madman; but he had a great eloquence and a queer attractive personality. Through his influence Josephine Dessars became acquainted with a society of revolutionaries known as "The Seven." In a moment of impulse and enthusiasm she joined it. It was a small society and consisted of but seven members. They were all possessed of powerful intellects and a really great enthusiasm, but all had the same curious twist—a disregard of logic, a love of theatrical poses, a contempt of individual suffering together with a real concern for the suffering of humanity. It was their optimism and youthful faith that attracted Josephine.

Their aim was an advanced Socialism; they talked a lot of the brotherhood of man. They had indeed a beautiful faith in a future Golden Age, but, like all fanatics, they were absolutely callous of the suffering they caused, with a firm belief in an ultimate end that should justify any means.

Josephine had looked upon the whole affair as an adventure. Although these people attracted her she was not of them. She did not at first realize that what was a passing enthusiasm, a mere thrilling experience, to her, was to them the whole aim of their existence.

So she listened to the passionate eloquence of Otto Geracht and joined "The Seven." She never forgot the night of her initiation. The members met at the dwelling-place of Geracht, a big, ugly house in a narrow back street. Ten o'clock was the hour for their meeting, and Josephine had gone to it straight from the theatre; she had hurried through the gaily-lit streets with an enjoyable sense of romantic adventure.

It was not until she had entered the bare gas-lit meeting-room that the first apprehension came upon her. She realized for the first time the immense earnestness of Geracht and his associates. She saw herself as she was, practical, happy, ambitious, and knew most certainly that she had nothing in common with these absorbed unworldly dreamers. She had felt suddenly hysterical and had become conscious of a desire to leave the house before she committed herself too far. But Otto Geracht had come to her and talked to her while they waited for the arrival of two late members, and the old feeling of adventure had in part returned to her. So she had remained, and when all the members had come they had seated themselves around a small square table, and she had been given a chair at the right hand of Otto Geracht.

As Josephine Dessars drove through the rainy streets of London to the Coliseum she lived again through that night of thirteen years ago. She seemed to see again the massive figure of old Geracht as he stood with square finger-ends upon the table addressing those few people in that great half-furnished room. She felt again, as she had felt so many times during the last five days, the old sensation of growing anxiety and repentance. She heard again Geracht's deep, rather harsh, voice as he formally introduced her. She remembered how the others had drunk to her health in some pale, sickly wine, and how Anna Petro, a Czech singer and the only other woman present, had looked at her across the table with a sort of contempt and pity in her melancholy eyes.

She had stood up as if in a dream and had repeated after Otto Geracht a pledge of life-long loyalty to the brotherhood. Then Geracht had opened an old brown-covered book and had read aloud the rules of the society, which were few. He had paused and had looked around the table slowly from one tense face to another; finally his large light eyes had rested upon those of Josephine.

"And it is required of each member when elected to take a pledge of loyalty to this

society. It is forbidden for any member to divulge to the outside world the names of any of his fellow-members, and it is forbidden for any member to divulge any of the secret affairs of this society. The punishment for any infringement of this rule is death."

Here he had paused, and Josephine remembered how she had watched, as if hypnotized, his big black-nailed fingers playing with the leaves of the book.

"Any member," he had repeated slowly, "who proves guilty of disloyalty will be discovered and put to death, no matter where he may be. He may hide himself in the remotest parts of earth, but sooner or later he will be found. He will receive a sign of his approaching death in the form of a black cross. In less than twenty-four hours from that time he will die."

"*He will receive a sign of his approaching death in the form of a black cross: in less than twenty-four hours from that time he will die.*" The words echoed through the mind of Josephine Dessars as clearly as if they had but just been spoken. Then she found herself repeating, like one who strives to comfort with a parrot-phrase of consolation: "But they're dead; they're all dead."

Sitting there in the darkness she began silently to tell over the names of those who had belonged to the Secret Society of Seven.

"—— Otto Geracht, died three years ago in Leipzig; Diedrich Kummer, killed in the Prague riots; Anna Petro, killed herself in Vienna the year after I came to England. They're dead, all of them. I have nothing to fear, nothing. They're all dead."

But her restless mind reverted once again to that far-off night in Vienna, and she seemed to see again the large eyes of Otto Geracht looking into her own with their vague peculiar gaze. For nearly a week she had seen those eyes, all through the days and in her dreams at night.

"You have been false," they seemed to say to her. "False! you have been false."

Josephine Dessars had been false. It was now three days since the sensational arrest of Sir Marcus Pinder, M.P.; he was yet awaiting his trial on a charge of high treason. And it was Josephine Dessars who had given the information which had led to his arrest. She had known of him in Vienna as a friend of Otto Geracht; she had indeed once met him at Geracht's house. She knew that he was pledged to the wild idealistic Socialism of the Society of Seven; he had not been a member, but she had heard him often discussed as one of the chief secret tools of the society. She knew that Geracht had had a very great influence over him and had indeed granted him sums of money with which to carry forward the cause. It was he who had arranged, under the directions of Geracht, the assassination of Mousset in 1906.

"'ANY MEMBER,' HE REPEATED SLOWLY, 'WHO PROVES GUILTY OF DISLOYALTY WILL BE DISCOVERED AND PUT TO DEATH, NO MATTER WHERE HE MAY BE.'"

All this she had known of Marcus Pinder, but during the peaceful, happy years which had elapsed after she came to England, she had heard little of him. She had still felt a certain sympathy for his ideals, although her old enthusiasm had long since died.

But when war broke out the old shadowy dreams of a brotherhood that admitted no nationality faded away. Josephine Dessars knew herself a Frenchwoman, an Englishwoman.

Then one day she had seen in the newspaper the announcement of Sir Marcus Pinder's appointment to a seat on the Treasury Bench. The name had leapt at her eyes from the white page as she had unfolded the paper. Sir Marcus Pinder! A host of recollections had come crowding into her mind. She had stood as one in a trance for a time while her thoughts had gone wandering back to the days when that name had been so familiar to her. Sir Marcus Pinder! Had not his mother been some relation of Diedrich Kummer? Her mind went back to an evening in the house of Otto Geracht. Pinder had been there. He had monopolized the talk at the supper-table. She remembered him as a short, thick-set man with greying hair and a birdlike vivaciousness of manner. Some of his words came back to her:—

"The seed we sow will not bear for many years in England or in France, Miss Dessars. In Germany, and in Germany alone of all the great nations, may we hope for quick and good results. The German mind has a broadness, an idealism——"

This man was helping to control the destinies of France and England. Josephine had consulted no one. She was accustomed to bringing her mind to quick decisions. She had written that morning to the Home Office, stating clearly all that she knew of Marcus Pinder; she had explained the way in which she had acquired her knowledge, and had given a detailed account of the Society of Seven. As she wrote she felt like one confessing his old childish follies. It was as she had written her signature to the letter that she had felt a curious sudden sensation of being watched. She had looked up. There had been no one in the room. But at that moment there had flashed back to her memory for the first time for many years the picture of a big, bare room and a tall man who held a book in his large white hands.

"And it is required of each member to take a pledge of loyalty to this society. It is forbidden to divulge any of the secret affairs of this society. The punishment for an infringement of this rule is death. . . . He will receive a sign of his approaching death in the form of a black cross. In less than twenty-four hours from that time he will die."

Josephine Dessars had addressed and posted her letter of information; but from that moment she had existed in a very inferno of restlessness and excitement. All through that night she had not slept, but had lain on her back with wide eyes looking into the darkness, unable to free herself of a terror that she knew was without foundation. So it had been for every night since that one. Memories of her past life possessed her mind utterly; not by any effort of will could she rid herself of them. Neither work nor amusement could divert her thoughts for one moment. She was like one under an obsession; she felt herself dwelling upon the borderland between reason and insanity.

Looking out at the wet dim-lit streets, she found herself wondering how long this obsession would last. She had a sudden impulse to speak, to put into words her vague alarms. She turned and slid her arm around the thin body of the girl at her side.

"Phyllis—Phyllis——"

Phyllis turned to her. But under those clear, thoughtful eyes Josephine fell silent. How could she tell this girl of her shadowy fears? What had Phyllis in common with those old days of intrigue and adventure? Josephine would not alarm and mystify the child with the tale of her own neurotic foolishness.

So she said:—

"It's nothing, dear. What are you thinking about that you are so quiet?"

"I was thinking about to-night. Oh, Josephine, I do hope the people will like it—I love first nights."

The car slowed down and came to a standstill. They stepped out into the fine misty rain. The street was almost deserted.

"Oh, I'm excited!" cried Phyllis, as they went up the long passage to Josephine's dressing-room. The bright-lit room was dazzling after the darkness of the street. Josephine took off her cloak and hung it over a chair. She went across the room to switch up the light over the mirrors.

"A—ah!" she cried, with a quick intake of breath. She stood rigid by the table, one hand outstretched towards the electric buttons. Phyllis saw her face go grey as paper. Her eyes dilated, and stared with an intensity of horror at something upon the laden dressing-table.

"What is it? What is it?" cried Phyllis, putting her arms around her. She was rigid to the touch as a dead thing.

Then suddenly her body relaxed; she groped for a chair and sank down upon it. She still looked with a kind of horrified bewilderment towards the dressing-table. The frightened girl followed the direction of her eyes. Two black sticks of grease-paint were upon the corner of the table; by some chance they lay one upon the other, in the form of a cross.

"Oh, what is it?" cried Phyllis again.

Josephine said:—

"Nothing." She began to laugh, and tears came very quickly to her eyes. Her mind seemed filled with a terrible chaos of speculations; she could not force herself to think clearly. Like one who hears voices in his half-sleep, she listened to the terrified questions and endearments of the girl who knelt at her side. Somewhere at the back of her brain a hammer kept time to the throbbing of her heart. "I shall go mad," said its every dull thud. "I shall go mad, I shall go mad."

Phyllis cried again, her face as white as Josephine's own :—

"Oh, José, what is it, what is it ?"

"I saw—I thought I saw—— Oh, it's nothing, Phyllis, nothing. I must dress." Josephine rose to her feet. She put her hand under Phyllis's chin with an attempt to smile ; but her eyes had not lost their look of dazed horror.

"SHE STOOD RIGID BY THE TABLE, ONE HAND OUTSTRETCHED TOWARDS THE ELECTRIC BUTTONS. 'WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS IT?' CRIED PHYLLIS."

"It's nothing, really. I'm awfully silly and nervy, I know, Phyl. I shall take a long rest when the season's over. We'll go away somewhere."

"But——"

"It was nothing, really. Don't think about it any more, Phylly. Help me with my dressing, dear ; I think we're a bit late. This will be the first time I've made myself up as an invalid."

She went on talking vivaciously as she took off her clothes ; it was less to reassure Phyllis than to stem the current of her own wild thoughts. But all the while she chattered there floated at the back of her brain a dark image, an ominous black cross.

Phyllis responded soon to her talkativeness and laughed as she stroked the folds of the garment that Josephine was to wear. It lay upon the sofa, a soft white robe of thick silk. The dance had been arranged by Josephine herself, and was set to the eerie music of the "Valse Triste" of Sibelius. It was to be a strange performance, and Josephine held secret doubts as to its good reception. The dance was an adaptation of the story to which the "Valse Triste" was written—of a dying woman, who rises from her bed and joins in the wild dance of the spirits that throng her room.

Josephine sang softly the slow opening bars of the music as she slipped her dress over her head. Phyllis watched her from the sofa, admiring the faint flush that excitement brought to her white cheeks.

"You'd better run along now," said Josephine. "I'm ready."

Phyllis turned her from the mirror and surveyed her. Her plain white dress hung in heavy folds to her ankles. It was suggestive of a bedgown. The long hanging sleeves almost reached its hem. She wore no wig, and her thick dark hair stood out around her face ; it was without band or ornament.

"Kiss me for luck, Phyl," she said, "and run along to the Stracheys." She turned to her mirror again as Phyllis closed the door behind her.

The safety curtain was being lowered for the interval as Phyllis entered the box where her friends were. The orchestra was playing a selection of popular airs ; a buzz of talk had arisen among the audience. Phyllis looked around the auditorium before she sat down. The place was crowded.

As the curtain began slowly to go up there

was a sudden hush; the first slow notes dropped on the heavy air like pearls. Phyllis leaned forward and settled her elbows on the edge of the box.

The curtain rose upon a dimly-lit stage. The walls were hung with deep purple curtains; the floor was covered in dark felt. In the centre of the stage, at the back, was a high couch draped with purple cloth. A woman clothed in white lay upon it. A small lamp burnt dimly by the bedside. There was not light enough upon the stage to distinguish any details; the purple background seemed full of deep shadows. The soft, slow music from the orchestra was as quiet as sleep.

For a minute or more there was no movement, neither on the stage nor among the audience. Then Josephine stirred upon her couch and moaned softly. The valse rhythm of the sleepy music became more insistent. Josephine turned and let one arm fall listlessly over the side of the bed.

Suddenly a white flickering light appeared upon the purple background and went out. Another appeared, and another, until the dark walls seemed alive with pale dancing flames. It was as if the dim stage were full of will-o'-the-wisps. The music grew louder and lost its dreamy quality. Josephine sighed deeply like one who wakes from an unquiet sleep, and raised herself slowly upon one elbow. The stage became dim again and all the little moving lights went out. Then suddenly one appeared, a patch of wavering flame, upon the hangings of the bed. Josephine put out her hand as if to touch it; it flickered away across the floor and up the wall. Josephine gave a soft hollow laugh and rose slowly from where she lay. She stood unsteadily for one moment; she was like a spirit in her long white robe. Her face was pale, and her bare feet were white as chalk against the purple carpet. Her eyes followed the movements of the dancing flame. She made one or two uncertain steps as if to reach it; then with a low laugh she sprang after it and the strange dance began.

Soon other faint wavering flames appeared upon the walls and floor, until the whole stage was once again flickering with pale lights. They flashed across the white, smiling face of Josephine as she swayed in her fantastic dance. They seemed to dance with her like living things. The dance grew always faster as it proceeded, until the stage was dazzling to the audience. The dancer's shining draperies seemed made of the same stuff as the white flames that leapt around them. It was an eerie performance; but it was beautiful.

Josephine felt nothing now but a great exultation. For her the facts of life had ceased to exist. She was a dancer, and nothing else; she was one with the lights that danced about her head and hands, and with the bright quick sounds that danced and died like invisible butterflies. For the first time for many tortured days she found forgetfulness. The smile that was on her lips was not acted, but was the unconscious expression of sheer happiness and triumph.

Wilder and louder grew the music, and the ghostly dance swifter and swifter: until the dancer suddenly stood still and put her hand to her eyes. Then as if exhausted she sank upon the couch. The moving flames went out; the stage was dim and shadowy again. The slow theme returned and the music from the orchestra was like soft calling voices.

All was still for a few moments. Then, as before, the music quickened and grew loud. The flickering lights appeared again singly. The dancer lifted her arms, and sprang to her feet like one who makes an effort. The wild dance began again. But now the small flames, as they appeared one after another, seemed to merge together until a pale light flooded the stage. It was a queer soft radiance, neither brilliant nor harsh; it was as if the stage were full of moonshine. In this still light Josephine danced, and her white dress gleamed like a lily under the moon. She felt etherealized, a spirit dancing on an immaterial plane. Her body moved in such perfect time with her mind that she seemed to have no body. Looking straight before her she saw, but without any recognition, the black and white blur that was her audience. A movement somewhere between herself and the blur caught her eyes, and all unconsciously she lowered her gaze to it. It was the baton of the conductor moving in agitated rhythm with the music. It brought her mind back to a certain extent from its uplifted state. She felt vaguely irritated by the sight of it; the cold commonplaces of life seemed to start knocking again at the doors of her mind.

The movements of her wild dance took her to the back of the stage, but when she came to the front again her eyes were caught once more by that small object; it seemed to move with a kind of crazy desperation. Her eyes travelled up the black sleeve of the man who held it.

Then the walls of the universe seemed to fall crashing about her ears. For a moment her mind was absolutely empty; then all that she had ever known of fear and evil rushed into it like a tidal river. For she had looked into the light eyes of Otto Geracht.

There he stood, massive and tall as she had always remembered him, his great shoulders rather hunched about his ears, his grey hair hanging in wisps over his forehead. Josephine went on dancing; her limbs moved mechanically. But her mind was filled with a terror more appalling than anything she had ever known.

Round the stage she went in her swift dance, but those clear eyes, she knew, never left her for one moment. She looked into them. There was no hostility in them: large and pale, they met her own with that faint vague questioning look she remembered so well. She could see every detail of his head and shoulders; there was no light shining upon him, but he stood out with clear distinctness. Swifter and swifter moved his arms, and his great body moved with them;

"JOSEPHINE'S EYES FELL AGAIN UPON THE CONDUCTOR. SHE FELT TRAPPED AND HELPLESS. SHE WANTED TO STOP THE DANCE, BUT HER BODY SEEMED HYPNOTIZED."

but his head was never turned to one side, and neither were his unblinking eyes.

Josephine forced herself to look away from him. She looked around the orchestra in the wild hope of meeting a friendly recognizing glance that might dispel the terrible illusion. She could not see all the members of the orchestra, but a few of them seemed to stand out with a curious distinctness, as if she were looking at them in the light of day. There was something familiar about the downbent head of the first violin, who stood next to the conductor. He raised his eyes from the printed sheet before him, and a cold hand seemed to close around Josephine's heart. It was Diedrich Kummer. He looked at her unseeingly.

In wild horror her eyes went from one figure to another. There were the others: Hugo Spizke and Charles Palacky stood at the right hand of Otto Geracht. They had fiddles; little Palacky was playing with that air of desperate concentrated alacrity which had distinguished all his movements. There to his right sat old Van der Heyder; he held the oboe in his hand and looked at Josephine with gentle dreaminess. Even as her terrified eyes swept his face he raised his plump hand and settled his pince-nez more firmly on his nose; it was an old mannerism of his.

There was the thin, sad Ledstein with the flute, and there Anna Petro sat by the harp. Her dark eyes held those of Josephine for a moment; there was no enmity in them, but the old enigmatical look of mockery and pity. Josephine in her wild fear had an impulse to cry out to her and implore her sympathy and support. In the old days she had been attracted by the woman's mournful beauty, and had been baffled by the atmosphere of mystery that had always surrounded her. Surely Anna Petro was capable of understanding and sympathy! But the dark eyes never changed in their regard, and the long fingers went on touching the strings with lazy indifference.

Josephine's eyes fell again upon Otto Geracht. She felt trapped and helpless. She wanted to stop the dance, to cry out, to leave the stage, but her body seemed hypnotized. Her lips were stiffened in a frozen smile. Her limbs moved without her volition; she had as little command over her movements as if she had been a wooden marionette, and the large hands of Otto Geracht had held the strings instead of the conductor's baton. Faster and faster moved that small gleaming stick, and wilder and louder grew the ghostly music.

In a very agony of terror Josephine looked up to the right in the hope of meeting Phyllis's sane and loving eyes, but she could see nothing. A black mist seemed to hang between her eyes and the auditorium. Only those grotesquely moving figures in the orchestra were distinct. She tried to scream, but no sound left her lips.

The wild music reached its climax. This was the end, then, at last. The light upon the stage went out as Josephine threw herself once again upon the dark couch. The music ended with a few slow bars. The curtain fell.

There was absolute stillness in the theatre for a few seconds. Then the applause burst out. As one man the audience rose to their feet. Volley of clapping followed volley. Someone at the back began to cry "Encore! Encore!" and the whole audience took up the cry.

Behind the curtain on the now brilliantly-lit stage four or five people stood with a sort of frightened hesitancy upon their faces. A man in evening-dress was bending over the white figure of Josephine Dessars where she still lay upon the purple couch. He raised his head towards the others with a shocked look upon his face; his lips seemed trembling into the form of a word.

A tall fair-haired girl suddenly came on from the wings. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes shone. She seemed about to speak, but stopped and stood looking towards the figure on the bed with nothing but surprise in her big eyes. One of the women left the whispering group and laid her hand upon her arm.

"My dear," she began. But Phyllis pushed her aside. She hurried towards the bed and leant over the small figure lying there. Then, very slowly, she drew back.

"Josephine—Josephine——," she said in a whisper that had a ringing quality which echoed for a long time in the brains of all who heard it.

But Josephine Dessars was dead.

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The Horse in Art

by

WALTER WINANS

Gold Medallist for Sculpture, Fifth Olympia, Stockholm, 1912.

THE BEST EQUESTRIAN STATUE IN THE WORLD. ONE OF THE FOUR HORSES BY BAPON CLOT ON THE ANITCHKIN BRIDGE, PETROGRAD.

Photo. Levitski

IN the world of Art the horse holds quite a different position from that of the human figure. The latter is studied anatomically, and by studies from the nude, at all art schools. An artist who has had any art education is therefore grounded in the external anatomy of the human figure, as well as in its proportions. But—and here comes the reason why the human figure is so much better portrayed than the equine—at none of these art schools is the least instruction given as to the anatomy or action of the horse, nor how to draw or model it.

A few schools of animal-painting there are, of course, but the majority ignore everything except the human figure. The result is self-evident at all galleries and in public monuments.

For example, a very capable sculptor, so far as the human figure is concerned, receives a commission for an equestrian statue. He has never modelled a horse before in his life. He gets a quiet old carriage-horse from a livery stable at so much an hour. He finds the stableman, sent to look after the horse, too bow-legged and unintelligent to sit to him for the rider; so he gets a professional model, who has never been on a horse in his life, to sit astride something. The result, even if not grotesquely unlike a horse, is certainly not a riding-horse, with the rider sitting into the back of the horse, because the sculptor posed his model without saddle-cloths and saddle-frame between him and the bar representing the spine of the horse, or sits him leaning back as if he would fall off.

I have had the most amusing experiences of this sort. One sculptor used a hackney as the ideal model for a charger! Another, in order to represent a sudden halt from a charge, made his rider lean back with both legs stuck out stiff in front and pulling at the reins with both arms outstretched. I had the greatest difficulty in making him understand that a charger is stopped with the pressure of the calves and a turn of the left wrist, not by main force.

By the way, what writer first started the absurd phrase of "turned his horse by the pressure of his knee"? I know what it is to grip tight with the knees to keep on when a horse is plunging, but I do not know how it is possible to press with *one* knee without giving a corresponding pressure of the other knee. Moreover, even if I could do so, I do not see that anything would result, except that a ticklish horse might whip from under me. Of course, what the writer meant to say was "turned by pressure of the rider's calf." Possibly the

phrase originated with some early Victorian lady novelist who thought the word "knee" was more modest than the word "calf"!

Even the Greeks of the best period put chariot-horses, instead of riding-horses, in the equestrian group of the Parthenon Frieze. This is the more extraordinary because the figures "bend" the horses and make them lead in the canter "with the aids" like good horsemen. It may be that the Greeks had not yet come to differentiating between the riding and harness types of horses.

Modern sculptors, therefore, in trying to be classical in their equestrian sculpture, are apt to make their chargers "harnessy"—a fatal error in the eyes of a horseman.

THE STATUE OF CHARLES I. IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE. LONDON.

AN "ARTISTIC" STATUE.

"Note the human eyes of the horse and how he spraddles his fore-legs—there would be room to drive a side-car motor-bicycle between them—while, instead of leaning towards the side on which his fore-leg touches the ground, he is actually leaning towards the one off the ground. Note also how his rider holds his legs away from the horse like a holiday Hampstead Heath donkey-rider."

Photo. Penfold.

VORTEX VITÆ.
BY WALTER WINANS, ROYAL ACADEMY, 1917.

Photo. London Stereoscopic Co.

Look over all the London equestrian statues and see how many of them would have any chance of even a "Commended" in a "Hack Class" at a country show. They could only win in the "Vanner Class."

The best sculptor of the horse who ever lived was Baron Clot, who modelled the four horses on the Anitchkin Most and the Alexander I. monument in Petrograd. See the illustration at the head of this article. It is one of a set of four horses. They represent four stages of leading a horse. The one illustrated represents the man and horse in perfect accord; the others show the horse in various stages of either getting the better of the man or breaking away from him.

In it will be noticed the perfect balance in proportion and action of man and horse, with just enough idealism in both, whilst preserving truth to Nature. It is in the old Greek spirit, whilst making a better horse than the Greeks modelled. Clot combined the Greek ideal with Nature, the result being ideal horses, perfect in anatomy and every plane exactly right, so that at whatever angle you look at these colossal horses they are absolutely natural, and this without the "distortion, so as to look right

PHYSICAL ENERGY, BY G. F. WATTS, R.A., IN KENSINGTON GARDENS, LONDON.

ANOTHER "ARTISTIC" STATUE.

"Notice the distorted action of the hind-legs, the spraddle of the fore-legs and their twisted shapes, the bulge on the man's back muscles, and the way he is falling off backwards."

Photo. Penfold.

when foreshortened," which some sculptors have to resort to, to hide defects.

One of my earliest recollections was, as a very small child, passing Clot's horses every day with my nurse, and having to be dragged away, as I stood looking at them in ecstasy. Their "style" has become indelibly fixed in my mind, and I have them always before me, mentally, when modelling.

Baron Clot idealized the lighter (Varanzoff Dashkoff) breed of Orloff trotter in the Anitchkin horses, but he was a horseman and did not make the Emperor Alexander's charger of this type—(Orloff's are, of course, carriage-horses, though the most perfect shape of any harness breed)—but he copied the Krenovoi cavalry breed of horse, a cross of Arab and thoroughbred, the ideal sculptor's animal for equestrian statuary.

Liberich was another great Russian horse-sculptor, but he sacrificed everything to literalness and did not possess the "style" of Clot, who knew just what to copy from Nature in a horse, and what to idealize, as Phideas did in the human figure.

Horse-artists, with few exceptions (like Rosa Bonheur, T. Blinks, and two or three living artists), can be divided in two classes: those who are good artists but no horsemen, and those who are good horsemen but bad artists. The horse-painters, seventy years or so ago, belonged to the latter class. They could not paint better than the men who go about nowadays to horse-shows to paint a horse for a few shillings, charging half-a-crown extra for a dupped grey, "because it takes longer to paint the spots."

The curious thing about these early English horse-painters was that, although practical horsemen (they were very accurate as to the fit of a saddle or bridle, the rider's seat and handling of the horse), they were so out in their drawing and proportions.

The early cave-dwellers of fifty thousand years ago were always right in their proportions and drawing of animals, but the above-mentioned artists made the necks too short, the legs too thin, the fetlocks and feet too small, and so forth, with many other errors. Even Herring, who

HAUTE ÉCOLE, STATUE BY WALTER WINANS, IN MARBLE PALACE, PETROGRAD.

Photo. Penfold.

STUDY BY WALTER WINANS FOR THE HORSE IN HIS EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF THE KING OF ITALY AT THE ROYAL PALACE, ROME. ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION, 1918.
Photo. London Stereoscopic Co.

could paint a horse's coat better than any modern artist, made these mistakes in drawing. On the other hand, the men who were good artists but no horsemen drew fearful caricatures of horses. Look at the horses of Rubens, Velazquez, and Dürer, three of the greatest artists who ever lived. They are simply ridiculous.

Compare these horses with those annually exhibited in Paris in the "Salon des Peinteurs du Cheval." Most of these sculptors and painters are amateurs, but they are *horsemen*, and if their work shows little of technical skill, their horses are real, and act and move as horses do, and their riders sit them like horsemen.

In England there is little amateur art of this kind. I do not refer to artists who do not take the trouble to learn anatomy and perspective, and merely make a few washes of water-colours and call it an "impressionist landscape." I refer to those who really work and make a speciality of horse-sculpture or painting. There ought to be a yearly "Horse Artists' Exhibition" held in London, not a namby-pamby amateur exhibition, but one open to all, professionals and amateurs. If the professionals beat us, so much the worse for us.

I give herewith a few illustrations of horse-sculpture—a few, necessarily, from my own work, as that is the only way to explain my meaning about realistic horses in contrast to conventional ones.

We now come to a sort of horse-sculpture the art critics admire. First, the Charles I., in Trafalgar Square (page 328), which they call the finest piece of equestrian sculpture in the world. Note the human eyes of the horse and how he spraddles his fore-legs—there would be room to drive a side-car motor-bicycle between them — while instead of leaning towards the side on which his fore-leg touches the ground he is actually leaning towards the one off the ground. Note also how his rider holds his legs away from the horse like a holiday Hampstead Heath donkey-rider.

The "Physical Energy" statue, another of my illustrations (page 329), is, according to the art critics, the finest bit of modern equestrian modelling. Notice the distorted action of the hind-legs, the spraddle of the fore-legs and their twisted shapes, the bulge on the man's back muscles, and the way he is falling off backwards. I once remarked to a lady, "It is said it was modelled with the end of the sculptor's umbrella"—a well-known studio joke. She took it all seriously, and said to me, "How clever of him!"

I leave the other illustrations for the reader to form his own judgment upon, after reading this article.

THE HORSE ON THE GUARDS' MONUMENT, LONDON.
The Author has refrained from commenting upon this figure in order that the reader may use his own judgment after reading the article.
Photo., Penfold.

THE WIDOW.

By W. B. MAXWELL.

Illustrated by G. Abbey.

HER looking-glass told Mrs. Burt that she was still a very attractive woman; and her heart told her that, being a good deal nearer forty than thirty, she was more than ready for a third husband.

She thought of the awful slaughter of men during the war, and the consequent diminution of the chances of any woman's getting a mate. And when you had had two already, and were not as young as you used to be! Such thoughts made her feel almost desperate. All the young blooming girls who had lost their sweethearts were now to be counted against one. She thought of the chances that she had thrown away in 1913 and 1914—one at Harrogate, one at Southend, and half a one here in Brighton.

With a growing indignation she read of young war widows marrying again, and studied their photographs in the illustrated newspapers. Indecent! If she had been married to a lad who gave his life during the war, she would have remained a widow to the end of it. But she had been single throughout the conflict. At the rate these little hussies were devouring survivors, the men simply wouldn't go round. The authorities would have to license Mormonism.

And her thoughts drifted off into the realm of speculation. Would it come to that at last—one man having five or six wives? As the papers said, the world was now being driven by the iron force of circumstances, the whole fabric of society was in the melting-pot; more unlikely things might happen. She fell to musing on the feminine mind. Could one ever bring oneself to be satisfied with only a share in the devotion and care provided by a husband? Perhaps a certain type of man might fulfil the obligations of so difficult a task—but he would have to be a real lord and master, somebody quite different from the late Mr. Burt and the earlier Mr. Hopkins.

Mr. Hopkins, her first, was a coal merchant, and Mr. Burt, her second, had been sometime borough surveyor of a moderate-sized town; but neither of them—No. What was the Latin quotation? *Nil bonus mortuary?* Let bygones be bygones. Whatever their faults, between them they had left her about eight hundred a year and some quite valuable, if old-fashioned, jewellery.

She went about the world with her maid, Jenner, staying in hotels or boarding-houses; and, thus escaping the burden and expense of a private establishment, she was really very well off. Indeed, Jenner used to say she was too well off to be so eager to change her condition. Jenner had a tea-making apparatus, and made afternoon tea in the bedroom; and if Mrs. Burt felt low of an evening, or at any other time, Jenner was always capable of serving a confidential whisky-and-soda without troubling the hotel management. By these little arts Jenner kept down the bills and made life more pleasant. Old Jenner was a treasure—there was no other word for it—and because of her long and faithful service she was allowed considerable freedom of speech; so that when she and her mistress chatted together, they were rather like the heroine and the confidante in one of those old comedies.

"There you are again," said Jenner, "always at it. I do believe you never see a pair of trousers but what you think there's a husband inside 'em coming your way."

"Nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Burt. "No, you wrong me, Jenner. My taste is much too fastidious. I should be woefully hard to please, if I ever did make up my mind to another venture."

"Oh," said Jenner, shaking her grey head, "you're too romantic altogether."

But she was not really romantic. Although very fond of show and fashion, she had sharp business instincts, and was by no means of a naturally trustful disposition. After spending a frivolous hour at an Oxford Street milliner's, choosing the sort of hat that she fancied would best suit her, she would go to the bank in Chancery Lane and methodically clip off the ripe coupons from her bearer bonds. She kept them in a locked box, and did not care for the notion of the manager playing with them. Also, she was quick to think herself imposed on at railway booking-offices.

"You've given me short change."

"No, I haven't."

"I beg your pardon, you have; and if you don't refund this instant, I'll go straight to the stationmaster."

"Why don't you look at your ticket? It's marked plain enough. One-and-three."

"Oh!" The fare had been raised again. "Shameful!" She went away repeating the word.

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Well, then, having been dressed by Jenner after tea one day, she came down the stairs at "Versailles," Regency Square, Brighton, looking very grand indeed. She was a large lady, with nut-brown hair and a florid complexion; her satin blouse had the richest embroidery, and was further decorated by her big diamond crescent and a ruby locket; her skirts had the rustle that can only be made by the best silk, though so often imitated with inferior materials. She passed through the lounge-hall and stood for a moment on the steps outside the front door. It was a glorious August afternoon. People were sitting on the steps of boarding-houses on the other side of the square; a gay crowd filled the King's Road, and from the pier there came sounds of music; now and then a motor-car slipped by with wounded soldiers in blue. One

"'OH, NO, I'M NOT A POET. I LIKE REALITY—SOMETHING SOLID THAT I CAN GRAPPLE WITH.' AND HE LOOKED AT HER. 'NOT AIRY-FAIRY NONSENSE.'"

saw soldiers in khaki everywhere, and hundreds of flaunting girls—munition workers, as she judged—following them, or hanging on to them, or impudently making their acquaintance without formal introduction. The sea, the asphalt, the glass shelters, all glittered and flashed in the warm sunlight.

Mrs. Burt came back to the lounge, sat down, picked up a copy of that admirable illustrated daily, the *Glass of Fashion*, and sighed softly.

Next moment she became aware of the officer. He was in uniform—a big, bold man of about thirty-five; handsome, too, except for the mark of the sabre cut on his nose. And that is a merit, rather than a disfigurement nowadays. He carried a swagger cane, and he slapped his leg with it now and then. He moved about, and stared at the few people sitting in the lounge in a way that made you lower your eyes or look at your paper. He had put Mrs. Burt in something of a flutter even before he took an empty chair near her and opened a conversation.

He told her his name at once—Captain Shelley.

"There is a poet of that name," said Mrs. Burt, with her finest manner. "Any relation?"

"Yes—but distant. I've never met him."

"Poetry hasn't come out in *you?*"

"Oh, no; I'm not a poet." And he had a devil-may-care laugh. "I like *reality*—something solid that I can grapple with." And he looked at her. "Not airy-fairy nonsense."

Mrs. Burt dropped her eyes, and then spoke with an assumption of casual politeness.

"On leave?"

"No, light duty."

"I dare say you've earned a little repose by what you've gone through."

"Well, I've been in it from the beginning." And he told her about the sabre cut—done by Uhlans in the retreat from Mons. Three of them, however, had bit the dust for doing it.

Mrs. Burt shivered. "I think you are all of you too splendid for words. But, oh, it *is* so dreadful."

"Don't you worry about that." And he laughed again.

They sat talking; and some of the things he said and his manner of saying them filled her with a delicious confusion. Presently one of the beribboned maids came and beat the gong and the captain started at the noise.

"What the dickens is it?"

"Only dressing gong. Not dinner. Personally, I am already dressed."

"Yes, so I should imagine. You could hardly make yourself more gorgeous, could you?"

"Oh, please——"

Then he told her about shell-shock. He had had that, too, for a little while. It still rendered him a bit jumpy.

"*What* they make you go through! We simply can't visualize it, sitting here safe at home."

They were alone in the lounge now; the other people had obeyed the warning of the gong. But their *tête-à-tête* was suddenly interrupted by a new arrival.

It was a young man dressed in a blue serge suit; he came sauntering through the front door and looked round the lounge.

"Oh, blow," said Captain Shelley, under his breath.

"Halloa. *There* you are," said the young man. "I've been hunting for you all over Brighton. I want to settle up, you know." Then he saw that his friend was in the company of a lady. "Beg pardon. Can I have a few words?"

Mrs. Burt half rose from her arm-chair, but Captain Shelley smilingly put his hand on her arm and detained her.

"Don't go," he said. "It's no secrets. Jack and I have nothing to be ashamed of." And he made a formal introduction. "The Honourable Mr. John Pierpoint—Mrs. Burt. Now, Jack, what's your hurry?"

Mrs. Burt resumed her scrutiny of the *Glass of Fashion;* but she heard all that they said, and she was enormously interested. It appeared that the two friends had been at a card party on the previous evening, and Mr. Pierpoint, having lost, was now come to pay his debt. Captain Shelley for his part did not wish to be paid so promptly, saying it could stand over for revenge, and the money, if he took it, would only burn a hole in his pocket. At this, however, the younger man seemed to get slightly nettled, for he said, "You seem to forget it is a debt of honour." On which Captain Shelley said, with curtness, "Very well. Have it your own way." Then when the amount was mentioned, Mrs. Burt nearly jumped out of her arm-chair; and, as it were automatically, she came back into the conversation.

"Do you mean to say that you two gentlemen play cards for such high stakes that the sum of six hundred and fifty pounds passes in a single evening?"

They both laughed.

"Does that shock you?"

"Indeed it does. You remarked just now that you had nothing to be ashamed of. But I think you ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourselves."

"Oh, it's nothing," said Mr. Pierpoint, laughing. "He knows it's only *lent*. I'll have it all back, and more, before I've done with him." He had handed Captain Shelley a packet of big notes, and he told the captain to count them.

"I'll take 'em for granted, Jack."

"Thank you," said Jack, with dignity, "I prefer you to count them."

"What a stickler for etiquette you are." Captain Shelley verified the correctness of the notes by twirling their corners, and put the packet in the breast-pocket of his tunic. "Well, that's all, Jack."

"Excuse me," said Jack. "You have had your money. I'll trouble you for my I O U."

"By Jove, yes." The captain laughed. "I forgot. No one will ever make a business man of *me*." And he brought a bulging letter-case from the skirt-pocket of his tunic, extracted a small bit of paper, and handed it to his friend.

"Right-o," said Jack. "Good evening, madam." And he bowed and withdrew.

In the next few minutes Mrs. Burt talked very seriously to her new acquaintance. "You may think it strange that I should take the liberty of offering advice to a stranger; but this war has turned the world so topsy-turvy that one does things now that one wouldn't have *dreamed* of doing."

"Fire ahead."

And she said how wrong it was for gentlemen to gamble at games of hazard—especially officers—in war-time. "Believe me, it isn't right." She said this very charmingly, smiling, and yet in an earnest tone. "And, if I may say it, I don't like your friend, the Honourable Mr. Pierpoint."

"Why, what's the matter with Jack?"

"I've no quarrel with his manners—which are just what one would expect in a person of his birth—but I don't think he's a good friend for you."

"Don't you?" Captain Shelley got up, stretched himself, and stood looking down at her. "Perhaps you're right. I *want* a friend. Well, any more advice?"

"Now you are offended. You think I have taken a liberty?"

"Don't you know that a pretty woman *can't* take a liberty?"

"Oh, please ——"

"I shall think you have lost interest in me if you don't go on."

"Then I *will*." And Mrs. Burt spoke to him about his winnings at cards. "Being alone in the world, I am forced to be worldly-wise. Put that money in the bank. You said yourself it would burn a hole in your pocket."

"And so it will."

"That's not right in war-time—or any other time. Take my advice. Get a large registered envelope, put those notes inside, and send it to your bank for the credit of your account. It'll be safe there, and it won't be leading you into temptation."

"How you lecture one."

"No, I don't. I simply ask you to do something wise and proper for your own good. Brighton's not the place to go carrying about valuable bank-notes in your pocket."

With an impulsive gesture he pulled out the bundle of notes, and offered them to her.

"*You* take charge of them for me. Then you'll know I'm out of temptation, and I shall know they are safe."

"No, that's out of the question—quite impossible." And Mrs. Burt smiled. "How do you know they'd be safe with me?" she added, archly. "I might run away with them. You are taking my financial position very much on credit."

"Bosh! I trust you all right. Keep them for me."

"No. But do what I have said. Promise me that you'll send them straight to the bank."

He put the notes back in his pocket and stood looking at her with bold, searching eyes.

"Is that just business advice?" he said, in a low voice. "Or do you ask it as a favour?"

Mrs. Burt had to look another way. His eyes seemed to be burning her. She was so troubled that she stammered; and the words that she

"THE YOUNGER MAN SEEMED SLIGHTLY NETTLED, FOR HE SAID, 'YOU SEEM TO FORGET IT IS A DEBT OF HONOUR.'"

said fell strangely on her ear, as if they were different words from those that she expected, or as if he were making her say just what he pleased. "If—if you insist—then promise—as a favour to me."

"I promise. Now I must be off."

"What! Aren't you staying here, in this establishment?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then what are you doing here?"

"I was passing, and I saw you come out on the steps, and—well, I suppose you bowled me over. Bye-bye!"

He was gone, and he had left her breathless.

Throughout the *table d'hôte* dinner she was silent and dreamy. She could only think of him. It is curious how you may know people a long time and yet really know very little about them; and how, on the other hand, there are occasions when chance brings about a complete disclosure of a person's character and circumstances in a very brief space. During that one conversation she seemed to have learned everything about Captain Shelley. He belonged to a good family, had aristocratic friends, was rich but extravagant. He was in the A.S.C. By temperament bold to a fault, reckless, generous in an off-hand style. With regard to women he was desperately cool in his manners, and, if the truth must be faced, probably very dangerous.

She was touched, in retrospect, by what he had said to his friend about there being no hurry to collect that awful card debt; and she was very much touched indeed by his anxiety to confide the money to her care. What an idea! Above all, she was deeply stirred by that final reckless speech. Bowled over! *What* an expression!

He turned up again about nine o'clock, and her heart leapt in her ample bosom when he spoke to her.

"Come for a stroll on the pier. Never mind about a hat. Throw that lace thing over your head. That's what the Spanish dames do." And as they walked on side by side he whispered to her: "My word, you do look fetching by night!"

"Please! I really beg!"

There was a crowd on the pier, and it all seemed like fairyland. It appeared to her that her gallant, dashing companion excited feminine curiosity in every direction. The band programme was over too soon.

When they reached the turnstiles he changed direction, took her down the flight of steps to that asphalt path which is used by the children on donkeys in daytime, past the funny little arches, by the boats, over the shingle, anywhere away from the crowd; and somewhere, in a vague, wild whirlwind, as it seemed, he made bold and terrific love to her. When he kissed her she nearly tumbled backwards; but he recovered her, and did it again. Her "Oh, pleases" were like the bleats of a sheep caught by a raging lion; at the gentlest his endearments were more like prize-fighting than ordinary love-making; and even in the midst of it, while struggling to keep her balance, she mentally recalled the timid caresses of Mr. Burt and the almost brotherly embrace of Mr. Hopkins. It was all over extraordinarily quickly—really only a kiss or two and a torrent of impassioned words—but while it lasted it was stupendous.

After this the affair went at lightning speed. It seemed incredible that until thirty-six hours ago she had never set eyes on him, and yet they were practically engaged to be married. It was madness; but, as they both confessed, they had fallen crazily in love with each other.

He called her "Little woman"; and that she certainly was not, whatever she might be. She called him "Boy," and asked him why she had so named him. "Because you are nothing but a great big overgrown boy, and I tell myself that's your excuse when you go on in a way that would otherwise make me angry."

Jenner, the maid, shook her head, and said, "Well, this is a case with a vengeance!"

"Oh, Jenner," said her mistress, "he has simply swept me off my feet! I am carried away by it."

"So I understand," said Jenner, dryly.

"But am I wise to do it?" In these confidences Mrs. Burt was nervous and trembling, even tearful. "Jenner, he's so strong, so masterful. He may be an awful tyrant later on."

"You'll find that a bit of a change," said Jenner, very dryly.

"It would break his heart if I tried to back out. His violence frightens me, even as it is. I shouldn't *dare*. No, I could only escape by flight. Sometimes I've half a mind to run away from him," and Mrs. Burt began to cry. "Am I silly? I should die if he took to bullying me. I am older than he is—a little. Oh, Jenner!"

"Have a whisky-and-soda," said Jenner.

"You can't counsel me—how can you? But, Jenner, tell me frankly: you've nothing in your mind against him? . . . Thanks."

"What should I have against him? I'll say this much in his favour. He seems to be pretty fluent with his money. He gave me a sovereign this morning."

"Did he? Not to bribe you?"

"*I* don't know."

"What did he say exactly?"

"Oh, he spoke laughing like. Says I was to take care of you, and perhaps I'd have somebody to help me take care of you before long, and then slaps his leg with his stick."

"Yes, he does that," said Mrs. Burt, ecstatically. "I know just what you mean. It's a little trick of his. I have seen him do it often. . . . You have made this rather stiff."

Thirty-six hours, forty-eight hours, seventy-two hours—such a lot was happening that it might have been a year. They went about together in the afternoons—to Shoreham, to Rottingdean—and in the evening they went on the pier. He had tried to make her his banker, in one sense, and now he made her his banker in another, borrowing a fiver from her to pay for these little excursions and treats. He had kept

"IT WAS ALL OVER EXTRAORDINARILY QUICKLY—REALLY ONLY A KISS OR TWO AND A TORRENT OF IMPASSIONED WORDS."

the promise about sending the money to his bank, and had told them to send him a fresh cheque-book, as he had exhausted his old one. For the moment he had to draw on her.

He gave her his photograph, but reluctantly.

"Little woman, I haven't one that does me justice."

"Then come and let's both be photographed."

"Oh, no. Your photograph is printed here," and he touched his tunic in front. "And as you are going to have my old mug opposite to you for the rest of your days, you can't want a picture of me."

"But I do, Boy. Little woman wants it dreadfully. For her to take out and look at when Boy isn't with her."

So then he produced a photograph from his bulgy pocket-book. It was only *carte-de-visite* size, just the head; but a good likeness, with eyes staring as in life, and the sabre cut showing plainly. He said she was to keep it to herself and not let anybody see it. "It's for you, little woman, and no one else."

The things he said sometimes were like the speeches that make you quiver when you read them in books and thrill when you hear them spoken on the stage. He said he would make her his plaything one minute and his queen the next. "I'll tame your proud beauty, and then I'll set it on a pedestal and worship it on my knees." He said she dressed "too old," and that after their marriage he would have her dress as quite a young girl, in the brightest colours, "Like a bird of paradise." He admired her jewellery, but objected to the antiquated setting. He said he would have all the diamonds and other gems taken out of the gold and reset as a butterfly or tiara, buying more diamonds to make up the quantity required. To this he would add three ropes of pearls left to him by an old aunt of the name of Lady Elizabeth. And then with these ornaments, in a ball dress from Paris, his little woman would "fairly knock them."

But, like lightning from a summer sky, came a violent outburst, and he would really frighten her for a moment or two. At a word he could set himself on fire with jealousy.

"Understand, you have fascinated me and you must bear all the consequences. I don't believe you have ever met a real man before—and you've conquered him, but, mark you, my lady, he means to conquer you too. By heaven, if you ever looked at anybody else, if you ever tried to play me false——"

"Oh, Boy!"

"Do you know what I'd do with you? First, I'd give you a dashed good hiding," and he slapped his leg ferociously.

"Boy! You—you couldn't be so cruel."

"Yes, I could. Then next, I'd wring the neck of the man who'd come between us. There. I can't pretend. If you don't like it, say so. That's the sort of man I am. Take me or leave me."

She decided irrevocably to take him. His violence alarmed, but his charms allured. Never had she tasted such emotion as his rapid changes of tone evoked. She thought of the insipidity of Mr. Burt and Mr. Hopkins. After a tiff Mr. Burt used to say "I hope I didn't wound your feelings yesterday"; and Mr. Hopkins would knock at her door and say, "May I come in, dear?"—in his own house, and to

his own wife. How could she doubt or hesitate? It was a brilliant, a dazzlingly brilliant match. An officer, a swell, a hero! "Yes, my aunt by marriage, Lady Elizabeth. Yes, these pearls are family jewels. Boy hung them round my neck the morning we were made one."

Monday—that was the day he came into the lounge. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. This Thursday afternoon and evening were dreamlike, tempestuous, fantastic. As she said, she was whirled away. He would wait no longer. To-morrow morning he was rushing off to London to get a special licence; and on Saturday, without a word to anybody, they would be united. To-morrow he would do an immense amount of business in London. He was taking up all her jewellery to put it into the hands of Messrs. Tiffany for them to prepare an estimate of the resetting. He would get out the pearls from the safe at his chambers in the Albany; he would buy the wedding-ring; and he wanted to pay off a few bachelor bills. For this purpose he made her change cheques with him. That is, he gave her a cheque out of his new cheque-book for six hundred and fifty pounds, and she gave him one of her cheques for a like amount. This, he explained, would save him a lot of time and trouble. On his way from London Bridge he would cash her cheque at the Chancery Lane Bank and hand in his. It would be a double entry transaction, and provide him with the cash in the quickest possible way. She scarcely understood or tried to understand. She did whatever he told her to do.

All these matters were settled on Thursday evening, which they spent in the reading-room of the boarding-house instead of on the pier. She was painfully fluttered, and she thought chiefly of her guilty secret. She had done something that he might not approve of, and she trembled at the idea of his possible anger. He had told her not to show his photograph, and he spoke now of their being married without a word to anybody.

But she had sent his photograph and her own photograph to the editor of the *Glass of Fashion* with compliments and a suggestion that they should be inserted as pictures of a newly-engaged couple. She could not resist doing it. She had waited so long; she had seen so many such pictures—"Viscountess Saltash, who will wed Major Loftus Jones on the 18th"; "War widow weds brother officer of first husband," and so on. Now it was her turn, and she could not refrain from taking it.

Would Boy be angry? No, he must forgive little woman for a tiny touch of pardonable vanity. She might truly plead that she was so proud of him she could not agree to conceal him.

"You look thoughtful. Anything on your mind?" He had risen; and, with the parcel in his hand, was about to tear himself away.

"No, dear."

"All right. I'll be back by the six o'clock train. You meet me at the station. Ta, ta, little woman."

Friday seemed endless, even before six o'clock. She was at once sustained and agitated by the day's issue of the *Glass of Fashion*. They were *in*—side by side. "Mrs. Burt and Captain Shelley to be wed shortly." The captain was better printed than the lady. He came out splendidly, staring eyes, sabre cut, all complete; so that you could recognize him right across the room, with the open newspaper propped up on top of the chest of drawers.

She received congratulations from all the boarding-house guests. In peace-time they would have been wildly excited. Even now they displayed considerable interest.

He did not return by the six o'clock train; nor by the six-forty; nor the seven-fifteen. The waiting at the station was terrible to her. By half-past eight she was almost demented. She thought of all the ghastly accidents that might have happened to him—run over by an omnibus, crushed by a falling house, killed in the shaft of a lift. After the arrival of the eight-forty she became a little calmer. The station officials suggested that perhaps a brother officer might have brought him back in a motor-car; or he might be flying back in an aeroplane; or, more likely still, he might have sent a telegram saying why he was delayed. They advised her to go home and see if there was a telegram or telephone message waiting for her there. She jumped into a taxi-cab and went, trembling and gasping, to Regency Square.

The lounge was in a state of agitation. There were police officers in it—ordinary police and military police.

"Oh, great heavens, what is it?"

They had come for Boy. They, too, were anxiously waiting for Boy.

They led her into the manager's little room, and closed the door on a bevy of inquisitive guests. And the chief policeman laid out on the table a copy of the day's *Glass of Fashion* and showed her Boy's picture.

"Yes, that is he, of course."

Then the policeman laid out another *Glass of Fashion*, of a date three months ago, and showed her just the same picture of him. But, oh, the wording under this earlier picture!

"DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN?"—in capitals; and in smaller type, "If so, help the police to trace him. He is a professional bigamist and also a deserter from the Army. Has victimized many foolish women during the course of the war." And they gave his description. "Injury to nose from the kick of a horse," and so on.

Mrs. Burt stared despairingly at the newspaper. She saw everything clearly now; she understood everything. He was the logical product of these dreadful times; he was the forerunner of that authorized Mormonism about which she had vaguely speculated; he was the masterful man with several wives. She did not give a thought to her lost jewellery or her emptied banking account. She was so pitiably in love with him still that she asked herself, Would not a fifth or sixth share of Boy have been better than this total blank, this unmitigated misery?

Is Dickens a "Washout"?

The Opinions of

MARY ANDERSON—HAROLD BEGBIE—MARIE CORELLI —EDMUND GOSSE—GEORGE ROBEY—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW—CLEMENT SHORTER—ISRAEL ZANGWILL, Etc.

Collected by Arthur Croxton.

The following answers to the question: "Is Dickens a 'Washout'?" tend to show that he decidedly is *not*. But there *are* certain classes of readers who do not find his writings to their taste, owing, it is probable, in a great measure to the fact that the habits and character of the people have changed so completely since the time of which he wrote. The reader will find this fact brought home to him by Mr. Harry Furniss's amusing drawings, which explain themselves.

"DICKENS is a 'washout'!" Such was the stupefying statement made to me the other day with the complete confidence of the early twenties, when, busily sorting out books for the Trenches, I came across a "Pickwick." It was a heretical suggestion and came from the lips of a charming girl. Highly educated, she had read wisely and well; her entry into practical life had been preceded by two years at a famous German finishing school—hence, perhaps, the odious remark! The assertion set one thinking. Did it echo the opinion of others? Did those in the 'teens and early twenties desire to cast out the gods of the middle-aged and the old? Were we, boasting of the sere and yellow of the forties —calling ourselves old men, now that the Man Power Act is in force —who have sworn by the genius of the great man who, with his magic pen, brought before us the humours, joys, and sorrows of the early and middle Victorian era — were we all wrong?

"Don't you know Captain Cuttle?" said a friend to his niece of fourteen. "You mean Captain *Kettle*, don't you, uncle?" was the reply.

The question at the head of this article seemed so startling that I ventured to address an inquiry to a certain number of my friends—representative men and women of the day. Did they consider Dickens a "washout"?—a phrase familiar to the soldier, but never before, I believe, applied to an author. First of all let me quote from a letter from an L.C.C. schoolmaster:—

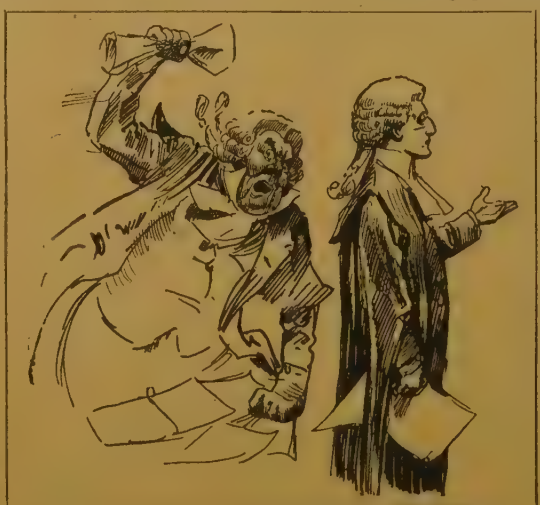
"As regards my experience in connection with the School Library, boys do not appreciate Dickens, especially when presented in entirety, simply because the life of the period that Dickens depicted has since the 'seventies been left behind. Dress, social habits, means of intercourse, and language have changed so much that boys fail to realize the atmosphere of the works of Dickens and are wearied by the wealth of detail which they cannot understand.

"Much has been done in schools to foster the habit of reading good authors, and with a fair measure of success; but as far as Dickens is concerned the only result to be recorded is that he is read by the few in an abridged form.

"But that is not Dickens!

"Therefore, I am forced to the conclusion that with boys Dickens, whole and entire, *is* a 'washout.'"

E. T. LITTON,
Headmaster of
L.C.C. School,
Rotherhithe.



IN THE LAW COURTS—YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

Let me ask you to glance at a number of further opinions:—

NURSES.

"I do not follow the slang of the moment, and therefore have not the slightest idea what your opponent may mean by 'washout.' If, however, the word implies depreciation, I can only say that no person whose judgment is worth a rush doubts that the fame of Dickens is as durable as a rock."

EDMUND GOSSE.

"I am quite certain that Dickens is immortal—quite certain; but I think the number of those who read him as a novelist is likely to grow less with the years. He is immortal by the force and richness of his creative power. His characters are as vigorous with immortality as any of the characters of Shakespeare: they cannot help living, and living they will keep their creator in existence.

"It seems to me that a good novelist must be above everything else a critic of life. But the critical and creative impulses seldom go together. That is why so many excellent novels have so few characters one remembers with either laughter or tears, and why so many bad novels are rich in men and women one can never forget."

HAROLD BEGBIE.

"I'm afraid I don't know what a 'washout' is. Will you explain? I'm not at all conversant with slang. I consider Charles Dickens the foremost of English novelists—sane, true, human, wise, witty, and *clean!*—such a lot in that last word! CLEAN! So that every decent boy and girl may read him without soiling their souls, and gain an outlook on life which is wholesome and sympathetic, instead of diseased and egotistical. Landon Ronald has been spending the week-end here, and, curiously enough, spoke of Dickens only yesterday with a grateful love and reverence which did him honour."

MARIE CORELLI.

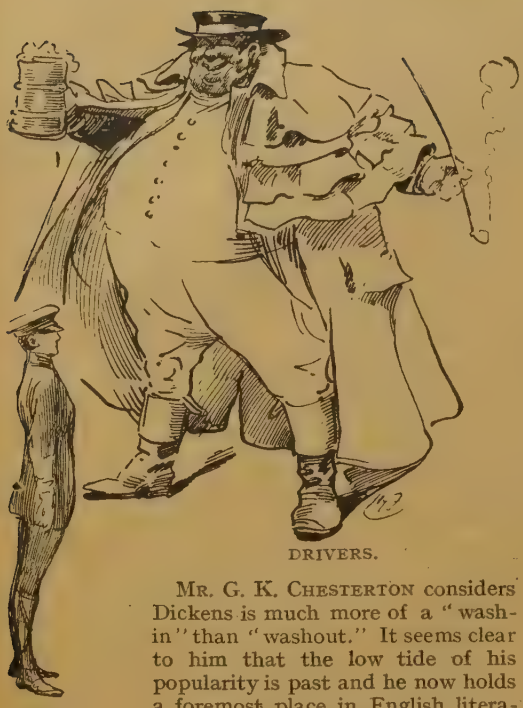
"I am very ignorant, but I have never heard the word 'washout' before, but I suppose it is an Americanism. If you mean that Dickens has lost his popularity I do not believe it. He is as much part and parcel of the national life as is Shakespeare. I do not suppose that the majority of people have much time to give to Shakespeare just now, but I count Dickens by far and away the most original writer of the Victorian epoch, much more so, for example, than Tennyson, who, undoubtedly, has lost a great deal of his hold upon the literary world."

CLEMENT SHORTER.

"I am afraid I do not understand what a 'washout' is. But assuming that Dickens is no longer read, I cannot agree with it. In the very last letter I read, a lady remarked that she was reading 'Nicholas Nickleby' to a lad while several more or less eminent people have told me that they are reading Dickens and other Victorian authors to get away from the war. It is true Dickens is not popular with the masses, who regard him, strangely enough, as rather heavy reading. But it is a question if he ever *was* popular with the masses, for many that we now call the masses could not read at all in Dickens's day. If a 'washout' means that Dickens is rightly fading from fame, then the phrase is nonsensical, for certain characters and scenes at least will live as long as the language."

ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

ARTFUL DODGERS.



DRIVERS.

MR. G. K. CHESTERTON considers Dickens is much more of a "washin" than "washout." It seems clear to him that the low tide of his popularity is past and he now holds a foremost place in English literature and English hearts.

"Mont Blanc is a 'washout' for anyone who has barely enough wind to climb Primrose Hill. Don't trouble about the 'authorities': try the booksellers."

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

"Certainly not. I should say that Dickens is anything but a 'washout.' In my opinion his books will live for centuries, because the characters he portrays are real live men and women—the sort of people that we see to-day, just as he saw them in his lifetime. Surely the fact that Dickens's characters are quoted all over the world is, alone, a proof that he could never be called a 'washout.'"

GEORGE ROBEY.

"Dickens is for all time, and wears an armour of public adoration which if *gnats* alight on, they must expect to be badly hurt. They can't worry Dickens's reputation. I feel sure you agree."

MARY DE NAVARRO (Mary Anderson).

"I have made inquiries with regard to the demands from us here in connection with the Camps Library, for Dickens's books, and I find that we are constantly asked for them, from all units of the Army.

"Specially, however, does the demand come from the prisoners' camps in Germany, and, again, more especially from our overseas men who are prisoners there. The four books for which they chiefly ask are 'A Tale of Two Cities,' 'Oliver Twist,' 'Dombey and Son,' and 'The Old Curiosity Shop.'"

EVA ANSTRUTHER (Hon. Dame Eva Anstruther).

"What exactly is a 'washout'? Dickens is not, perhaps, as familiar as formerly to young readers; that is, they might not be able so easily to pass an examination as to his characters and plots. There is still, however, a vast number of readers of Dickens, shown not only by the editions of his works which are kept in print, but by the number of copies that get worn out in public libraries. I will send you as a specimen one of his books which has been discarded from one of our libraries."

C. W. SUTTON, Chief Librarian of the Manchester Public Library.

Mr. Sutton was good enough to send a copy of "Pickwick." If put under the microscope, I believe it would show a record of bacteria extending to the billions. It was, also, somewhat dirty.

"There are, of course, hundreds of copies of the works of Dickens in the various branch libraries in the city, and no doubt the issue of those is approximately the same as in the Central Lending Library. It is, however, most important to bear in mind that the novels of Dickens, Thackeray, Lytton, Scott, and even the Brontës, Mrs. Gaskell, and others, are not borrowed from the Public Libraries in the same proportion as the popular novelist of to-day, for the simple reason that so many people have copies of their own. When one remembers the enormous number of editions of Dickens's works which can be obtained at small cost, the use still made of his works by borrowers at Public Libraries is, in my opinion, remarkable."

WALTER POWELL, Chief Librarian of the Public Library, Birmingham.

"Is Dickens a 'washout'? I have no hesitation, myself, as the author of three highly successful books on Dickens, in saying that nothing could be further from the truth. My second book, 'The Pageant of Dickens,' which classifies the characters, is now selling in its third edition. My third book, 'The Soul of Dickens,' published last year, has nearly exhausted its first large edition.

"A further fact, which you can verify quite easily, is that there are more copies of Dickens's works sold every year in England and America than of all the other popular novelists combined.

"You must remember that every new generation finds in Dickens a perennial interest. His works are now used in many of the Elementary

Schools throughout the country, and how popular he is amongst the children is testified to by the avidity with which they enter the yearly competition organized by the Dickens Fellowship, of which I have the honour to be the President."

W. Walter Crotch.

"If it is meant by 'washout' that Dickens is not read to-day, that his books make no appeal to the present times, that he is no longer popular, then my answer is emphatically in the negative.

"Abstaining from any personal expression on the subject on the ground that I may be considered prejudiced, let me state a few facts as against opinions.

1. The works of Dickens during the last decade have been more popular—that is to say, his sales have been larger—than any three famous novelists put together. That fact can be confirmed by any good bookseller you care to ask.
2. During the last three years those sales have been almost doubled. As the publishers of his works in numerous editions this fact can be substantiated by our books.
3. A fuss is frequently made when a modern novel reaches a sale of fifty thousand or so. Some of Dickens's novels sell more than that every year, and he has been dead forty-eight years. It may be asserted that such figures do not prove that he is read and enjoyed. My answer to that would be:—
   (*a*) Persons do not buy shilling and other cheap editions of a novelist to ornament their bookshelves. They leave such an action to the person with plenty of room and money who wishes to furnish a library. The persons who buy cheap editions buy them to read, and read them.
   (*b*) The number of admirers and readers of Dickens, therefore, if it could be arrived at, would simply amaze the sceptical.
   (*c*) There is a society, small in comparison with the above statement, known as the Dickens Fellowship, whose membership at the last census was over twenty-five thousand and may be more to-day, with a very popular magazine, 'The Dickensian.'

"Again, nearly every novel of Dickens has been made into a film—very badly made, I must admit that—but, nevertheless, the fact that this is so proves that even the makers of films see something in Dickens which spells commercial success. No other 'popular' novelist has been so exploited on the film.

BILL SIKES AND——

RAFFLES.

"Recently one of our famous elocutionists, Professor Wm. M. Miles, went to France to give recitals to the soldiers there. His repertoire is very extensive, including Shakespeare, Milton, Hall Caine, Jerome, Mark Twain, Kipling, Alfred Noyes, Longfellow, Tennyson, indeed most of our famous poets and novelists. His experience amongst the brave fighting men is that Dickens is their favourite author. Even the Germans themselves carry Dickens's books about with them."

B. W. Matz, Editor of the Memorial Edition of the Life of Charles Dickens and of "The Dickensian."

"I know it is becoming fashionable among our youth just from the academy to decry Dickens. It was, I think, the late Lord Shaftesbury who said that 'God gave Charles Dickens a general retainer against all suffering and oppression.'

"I regard him as the pioneer *par excellence* of social reform—the champion of the cause of the poor who succeeded in stirring the national conscience as to their undeserved condition. He expounded the virtues of the poor as no one else has done in English literature.

"He has also been very truly described as 'the great interpreter of childhood and the great exponent of its needs.'"

Douglas Eyre, Warden of Oxford House, Bethnal Green.

As one expected, there is a general consensus of opinion that Dickens is still the apple of the Public's eye, although there is a mountain of rebellion in existence which is at any rate entitled to a respectful hearing.

The Modern Method

by William Caine

Illustrated by Balliol Salmon

SIR CHARLES MERRYWEATHER slung his creel on his shoulder, took a rod from the rack, and stepped out through the French window on to the lawn. It was a great morning for the river. The valley was filled with the promise of summer.

His daughter Euphrosyne—a family name, its only excuse—was pottering about near some lilac-bushes with a pair of scissors and a basket. As Sir Charles appeared she laid these things on a garden-seat and came to join him.

"I'll see you as far as the bridge, daddy," she said. "Let me carry the rod."

Sir Charles indulged her wish. Having a free arm, he passed it round her and gave her a hug. He was very glad to have her back again, for the month which she had just spent in London with her Aunt Cordelia and Uncle John had seemed very long to him.

"I made your sandwiches myself," said Euphrosyne. "Sardine, olive, and plum jam. And two sorts of cake. Is that all right?"

"You spoil your old father," he said, hugging her again. "I never get decently looked after when you're away, Phrozzie. It'll be a bad day for me when you go off with some rascal of a fellow who won't know how to appreciate his luck."

"Be sure," she went on, ignoring his words, "to be home in good time for dinner. I've ordered a sweetbread and a sucking-pig for you—and a gooseberry tart, and if you bring home some trout we'll have them as well. I've got to make up for my neglect of you all this last month," and she snuggled in to his side. "Oh," she said, "I'm so glad to be home again to look after you, my dear daddy! I'm never happy about him when he's at Mrs. Pearce's mercy."

"Yes!" said Sir Charles. "I seem to have been living on beef and mutton exclusively ever since you went away. Mrs. Pearce is, no doubt, a splendid housekeeper, but in the matter of menus she rather lacks imagination. It would be a long time before she'd think of a sucking-pig. But *you* hit on it the very first day!"

"And," said the girl, "I'm going to give you some ice-cream, too. I brought a freezer home with me. Aren't I a good little girl?"

"You're an angel," said Sir Charles. And he thought, "She still loves the old man best." In spite of his confidence in her affection he was always a little uneasy over his child's yearly London visit. Where a girl of twenty—and as pretty as this one—was concerned, London was a danger to him, he could not deny it. But for this year he need not worry. She had come back heart-whole. She would never be so loving and happy to be back if it were otherwise.

"And you *are* in a good temper, *aren't* you?" Euphrosyne asked, pawing his sleeve.

"I am," said Sir Charles, "in the most perfect temper that ever was. Who wouldn't be, with a fishing-day like this and his daughter home again, and the promise of a sucking-pig and ice-cream at eight o'clock? And now," he added, pinching her cheek in playful, paternal fashion, "what am I to do in return for all this, eh?"

"Oh," she cried, "you horrid old creature! As if I wanted you to do *anything!*"

"You relieve me," he said. "I expected a demand for at least five new dresses."

"Oh, well," she admitted, "of course, I always want clothes. But that can wait. There's no earthly hurry about them. I sha'n't want a *thing* for months, now I'm home again. And certainly I shouldn't dream of spoiling your morning by worrying you in that way. Not to-day, at least. Oh!" she cried. "Aren't you going to begin at the bridge?" for he had turned along a path which would take him half a mile lower down the river than the spot she had mentioned.

"I rather thought," he said, "of starting at the mill this morning."

"Oh, no!" she protested. "Don't go down there. It's all mushy walking, and I'm in slippers. Come to the bridge and let's see if old Billy's rising." She referred to the bridge trout.

"He's sure to be, confound him!" said Sir Charles. "That is why I wanted to begin at the mill. Whenever I start at the bridge I always waste an hour of my precious time over that infernal fish. But if you insist upon it, I suppose I must do as you say. Perhaps I'll be rewarded by taking the life of Billy at last."

They went on towards the bridge, but just as they came to it Euphrosyne halted with an exclamation. "Oh, my poor lilacs!" she cried.

"'AND YOU ARE IN A GOOD TEMPER, AREN'T YOU?' EUPHROSYNE ASKED, PAWING HIS SLEEVE."

"They'll be all withered. I must fly. I never meant to come so far. Good luck to your fishing, daddy, and remember the sucking-pig!" She pulled his head down, kissed his ear, and departed, running. Sir Charles looked after her affectionately, and then went on to the bridge.

A young man leant upon the parapet, staring moodily into the river: a dark, very personable young man, who carried a knapsack and a thick stick and wore knickerbockers and heavy boots—clearly a pedestrian.

Sir Charles, who was in truth in a very good temper, bade this young man a cheerful good morning. "Any fish moving?" he asked.

"There's rather a hefty brute here," said the youth.

"That," replied Sir Charles, "will be my old friend Billy."

"He's been wolfing down the olives like one o'clock for the last ten minutes," said the other. "But I expect he's a wily 'un. They always are under a bridge, aren't they? Are you going to have a whack at him? Because I'm afraid the fly's rather off for the moment."

"I suppose I must," said Sir Charles, with a sigh. "I never have the strength of mind to let Billy alone. I suppose, if ever I catch him, I shall have to put him back again. This bridge wouldn't be the same without Billy. I dare say you can understand, for I fancy you must be a fisherman yourself."

"I used to be," the young man informed him, morosely. "I used to be a lot of things. I used to be a stamp-collector." He emitted a hideous, hollow sound that vaguely resembled laughter.

"Bless my soul!" cried Sir Charles. "That's not the way to laugh on a morning like this and at your age."

"I beg your pardon," the young man observed, "a morning like this is exactly the most intolerable kind of morning that I can imagine, and life never seems so rotten to any age as it does to mine. I am twenty-four. You have perhaps forgotten, sir, how tragically twenty-four can take itself. I should say that you yourself are a little over fifty. Now, at fifty life has no longer any meaning to a man. He has plumbed its emptiness. Whereas at twenty-four he only suspects that it is empty. Twenty-four is still cursed with illusions which it cannot decide to jettison. Happiness, I conceive, sir, is impossible until we have got rid of our illusions, or have had them destroyed for us. Do you not agree with me?"

"An original," thought Sir Charles. "This promises to be more amusing than being defeated by that infernal Billy. Let me draw this young chap out; at any rate while I wet my gut."

"Yes," he said, as he got out line and lowered his cast on to the water, "I dare say you're right. Youth is the really tragic period. It is not until we have shed it that we learn not to take life too seriously. When I was a young man, I remember, I believed that it was my duty to carve out a great career for myself, and my failure to do so made me very unhappy. To-day I see clearly that I was never made of

the stuff out of which great careers are carved, and it doesn't distress me in the least. Yes, I suppose I have outlived my illusions, or most of them. At any rate, I find myself perfectly reconciled to the cultivation of my garden here."

"A garden a square mile big, Sir Charles, with four thriving villages in it, might reconcile most of us to the loss of our illusions."

"Ah!" said Sir Charles. "You know me?"

"You were pointed out to me yesterday evening," the youth explained, "by the landlord of the Spotted Cow, where I spent last night. And since I don't desire to have, as they say, the advantage of you for a moment, permit me to name myself—Richard Langdale."

"Thank you, Mr. Langdale. You are walking through our country?"

"I am, Sir Charles. I have a question to decide which demands seclusion. I wrestle with it as I walk. There is no better aid to thought—or so I find—than pedestrianism."

"And it is this problem," said Sir Charles, with a smile for the sententious fellow, "which, I gather, is responsible for the gloomy outlook upon life to which you have just confessed?"

"It is," replied Langdale, "and perhaps you will do me the favour of hearing me state it; for I happen to have reached a point in my consideration of it when I feel the need of making such a statement to an impartial ear. The co-operation of a man who has outlived his illusions will, I am sure, prove of inestimable service to me."

Sir Charles lit a cigarette. "I am at your service," he announced, and leaned against the bridge.

"The principal preoccupations of young men," Mr. Langdale began, "are three in number: the state of their souls, or their spiritual future; their careers, or their material future; and their love affairs, or the future of their hearts. As to the first of these, I have already done with it; at any rate for the time. We need not discuss it, for no form of discussion can be more unprofitable. As for the second—my career, that also is settled. I am going to the Bar. I have an income of two thousand a year. I am a ready speaker. I have taken all the medals and prizes in Law that were going at Oxford. And I have an uncle who is a solicitor with a vast practice, and who loves me like a son. Also, he has no sons. In short, my prospects in my profession are of the rosiest, and I may easily end up as Lord Chancellor; for my ambition is limitless and my constitution is superb. You are now in a position to judge for yourself what is the cause of my present unhappiness."

"Yes," said Sir Charles. "You are in love. And the lady is not kind. You are walking through Hampshire in order to discover whether you shall blow out your brains or perhaps cut your throat; or, on the other hand, continue your progress towards the Woolsack. Believe me, the latter course is the wiser of the two. On the word of a man who has lost his illusions, Mr. Langdale."

Sir Charles was infinitely entertained, but he spoke so sympathetically that nobody could have guessed it.

"My very good sir," cried Mr. Langdale, "have I, then, given you so false an impression of my character? If the lady were unkind there would be no problem whatever. Pistols, razors—what sort of weapons are these against a misfortune such as you have suggested? Pray do not suppose that you have to do with an imbecile. To a man of any force at all an unrequited love can prove to be nothing but a stimulus to work. No, my good gentleman, you misapprehend the position entirely. I am in love; yes. But the lady is not unkind. Very far from it. She loves me passionately. She worships the ground I tread on. She would marry me to-morrow."

"Then," Sir Charles demanded, "what in Heaven's name is the matter? You have two thousand a year. Surely that is enough for a modest beginning?"

"You say that, Sir Charles," Mr. Langdale observed, "because you yourself have about ten thousand a year—or so the landlord of the Spotted Cow assures me; though how the devil he knows is another matter. But be your income larger or smaller—since I see that you reject the figure I have mentioned—it is obvious that you are a rich man. It is a common delusion of the wealthy that two thousand a year is a very decent little income. In the same way people of moderate means will always tell you that two pounds a week is a princely wage for a workman with a wife and ten children. But, my dear sir, would you care to set up housekeeping on two thousand a year with a wife who comes of people as rich as you are to-day—for such is this young lady of whom we are speaking? You know you wouldn't. What! drag down a creature so delicately nurtured, who has never known what it is to be without as many dresses, horses, servants, motor-cars, and all the rest of it as she may happen to fancy; drag such a creature down to the six-room-flat-and-two-maids level, which is all that two thousand a year will run to! Can you really advise it?"

"Pooh!" said Sir Charles. "You exaggerate, my young friend. If this girl is worth her salt she will manage to put up very well with life on two thousand a year. It is the best thing in the world for such young people to have to do without a few things for a time. It makes them appreciate money at its right value."

"That's all very well," said Langdale, "and perhaps such a reduction in her circumstances would not be so very dreadful; but I have to consider the possible loss of her father's affection. We do not, of course, look to him for a penny of help——"

"Most proper," Sir Charles interjected.

"But," Langdale continued, "I shall never forgive myself if, as is quite likely, he cuts up rough and severs all connection with his child. I am, you see, at present, a good deal of a nobody, and he may consider that she is throwing herself away."

"Mr. Langdale," said Sir Charles, "your delicacy does you the utmost honour, but it is misplaced. A father who would act in the way you suggest would be unworthy of the name. You are clearly a *parti* that no reasonable parent can have warrant for refusing. And if this old hunks," he continued, warmly, "behaves as you suggest, if indeed he does not actually come down pretty handsome in the matter of the settlement, he will prove himself, in my opinion, a person with whose acquaintance you can only too happily dispense. And so you see that I am no more impressed by your second point than I was by your first. If this is all——"

"Ah," cried Langdale, "but it is not all! It is not half. Indeed, it amounts to little more than an introduction. You can perhaps persuade me to disregard the scruples which I have already sketched; but now we reach a matter of which you will not dispose so easily. I refer to my own fundamental unworthiness to be this lady's husband."

"Oh, lord!" shouted Sir Charles. "Every decent lover thinks himself unworthy to marry the girl he adores. It is only natural. Having put her up on a pinnacle and having prostrated himself at the foot of it, how should he regard himself with anything but contempt, as a being infinitely below her, who yet aspires to make her his own? Such a man is bound in decency to loathe and despise himself. I felt the same at your age; but it may comfort you to learn that I got over it and without any great difficulty, though I do not remember how."

"Sir Charles," said Mr. Langdale, "the experience of one man is not the experience of another. I cannot believe that you were ever such a ruffian as I am. I don't believe that many such scoundrels as I have existed. Yet this girl thinks me good. I say, she thinks me good, sir; yet I have been drunk on two occasions, once when I was nineteen, at a bump supper, and once when I came of age. What matter that I have learned to control myself absolutely among bottles. The damning fact remains that twice I have been the worse for liquor. And she thinks me good."

"And I," said Sir Charles, "was always getting tight at the University. My dear boy, I was sent down for a term for it."

"Perhaps you were," Langdale retorted, "but that is *your* affair. It is my own record that is rising in judgment against me now. I am very fond of cards and I cannot properly enjoy them unless there is a trifle to play for. I am, in short, a common gambler and often win or lose as much as ten shillings during an evening's play."

"A desperate business, indeed!" said Sir Charles. "Why, the year before I married I lost a thousand pounds to a man at piquet one night and took nearly a couple off him the next. I say tush to your ha'penny nap, sir! If there is nothing worse than all this——"

"'I AM A LIBERTINE,' HE ANNOUNCED. 'I ONCE KISSED MY MOTHER'S HOUSEMAID BEHIND THE PANTRY DOOR.'"

Mr. Langdale beat his breast suddenly with his clenched fist.

"Ah," he cried, "but there is!" He lowered his voice. "I am a libertine," he announced. "I once kissed my mother's housemaid behind the pantry door."

"Is that all?" snorted Sir Charles, contemptuously. "My dear sir, by the time I was your age I had kissed—well," he broke off, "never mind that. It is *your* record, as you were good enough to remind me, that we are discussing. May I say, sir, that I find it about as blameworthy as a Sunday-school address? No wonder the country is going to the devil if our young men can do no better than this with their opportunities. I beg you to believe, sir, that you take an exaggerated view of your misdemeanours. And I tell you, sir, that, comfortably off as you are, highly talented and related to an influential solicitor as you are, you will do well to throw these doubts of your fitness overboard, and ask your young lady to name the day at once. Believe me, after a month of marriage you will be troubled by no illusions regarding your wickedness, while the lady will have equally modified her opinion of yourself as you will yours of her. Yet will you be no less in love with one another, but rather more. In fact, I see but one possible threat to an ideal union, and that is that singular insipidity, sir, to which you have just confessed."

"Do you say so, sir?" Langdale asked, with a laugh. "Well, well! We cannot all be devils of fellows, I suppose, and if you will promise to keep *my* respectability a secret, I will undertake to say nothing about her father's dreadful past to Euphrosyne."

With this, he raised his hand in a peculiar gesture.

Sir Charles stared. "Euphrosyne!" he exclaimed.

"Your daughter, Sir Charles," said Mr. Langdale. "Behold her!" Euphrosyne had, indeed, by some magical means, appeared beside them.

"The devil!" cried Sir Charles, reddening. "This explains the sucking-pig!"

Euphrosyne and Mr. Langdale took hands and fell on their knees in the dust of the roadway. They looked very attractive, she so fair, he so dark, and both so beautiful. And both so innocent.

"Sir Charles," said the young man. "You are in possession of my qualifications to become your son-in-law. What are you going to say to them? I need only add that Euphrosyne's Uncle John is my father's lifelong friend. And so much for my references."

Sir Charles bent a stern gaze upon him. "It was not thus," he said, "that young men in my time approached the fathers of the young women whom they desired to marry. I find your conduct indecorous, sir. I ought to be extremely annoyed. Indeed, I *am* extremely annoyed. Unfortunately, your audacity has justified itself by causing me to find your conversation not wholly intolerable. Were it not so, I should characterize your proceedings as underhand. But as I have come, I hardly know how, to like you, I can only look upon it as original and rather charming. The duplicity of Euphrosyne, however, cuts me to the heart. I very much doubt if I shall be able to eat any of that sucking-pig; but as it was evidently intended primarily for Mr. Langdale's consumption, this is a matter of no significance. And now tell me, you ridiculous young things, why you must needs play off your games upon a harmless old man? Why, Phrozzie, couldn't you give your poor stupid father a hint? Why couldn't you, Mr. Langdale, come to me in the usual way?"

"What!" exclaimed Langdale, as he rose, helped Euphrosyne to her feet, and brushed his knees. "What! and poison our friendship, Sir Charles, in its inception! Perish the thought! Friendship is a quite spontaneous thing and may in no fashion be arranged or commanded. A breath of compulsion—and it is killed. Why do we hate our cousins? Because they are imposed upon us as people whom we must call by their Christian names, though we may hardly know them by sight. And it must be the same with relations by marriage. At any rate, it is upon that assumption that I have acted this morning. I desired, Sir Charles, to be your friend as well as your son-in-law, and I took what appeared to me to be the only means of securing that consummation. You have owned that you have enjoyed this little talk that we have had. Could you do so, had I arrived by solemn appointment to state intentions with which you would have been already acquainted? Believe me, Sir Charles, you must have loathed me for robbing you of your child before ever even seeing me, and our interview must have been covertly hostile and infinitely embarrassing. But I have surprised you into a cordial feeling. You have sympathized with my sorrows. What though they were imaginary? You have sympathized with them. You have given me the best advice you could. You have pooh-poohed my scruples. You have defeated me in argument. It is impossible for you to feel otherwise than kindly towards me. Incidentally, I have told you my income and my prospects and you have called yourself a hunks if you don't do the right thing by Phrozzie. But this last matter I do not wish to emphasize, just as I did not wish to entrap you into the admission. And so, sir, will you not give us your blessing and permit us to cease to interfere with your sport? I notice that the fly is coming on very strong again."

"Phrozzie," said Sir Charles, as he took the girl in his arms, "I warn you that you have to deal with a formidable fellow. Do you think you can manage him?"

"I think so, daddy," she whispered.

"Oh," Langdale assured him. "It was all her idea, Sir Charles. I only spoke from my brief. I assure you, she can manage me perfectly."

"In that case," said Sir Charles, "who am

I to attempt resistance? Take him away, Phrozzie," he continued, releasing her. "Take him up to the house and find a room for him somewhere. And, Mr. Langdale, since you may desire to discontinue your walking-tour for a time, I suggest that you telegraph to your home for some more clothes than you can carry about you."

"Oh," Euphrosyne called back to him, "that's all right, daddy. His trunk's down at the station. We'll just have nice time to fetch it before lunch."

"EUPHROSYNE AND MR. LANGDALE TOOK HANDS AND FELL ON THEIR KNEES IN THE DUST OF THE ROADWAY."

The Battle of Messines.

"A Model and Masterpiece of Modern Tactics."

BY

A. CONAN DOYLE.

Turning Sir Herbert's Hair White—Advance, Australia!—Advance of Twenty-fifth Division—The Two Irish Divisions—The Advance of the Nineteenth Division—Advance of Morland's Tenth Corps—The Results.

THE operations upon the Somme in the autumn of 1916 had given the British command of the high ground in the Somme district. The next move was to obtain a similar command in the continuation of the same high ground to the north. This was accomplished from Arras to Lens in the great battle which began upon April 9th, 1917. After the complete conquest of this Vimy position, the next step was obviously to attack the prolongation of the same ridge in the Ypres direction. This was carried out with great success upon June 7th, in the Battle of Messines, when nine miles of commanding country was carried and permanently held, from the neighbourhood of Ploegstreet in the south to Hill 60 and Mount Sorel in the north. Thus many spots which will for ever be associated with the glorious dead—Hill 60 itself, with its memories of the old 13th and 15th Brigades; Wytschaete, where the dismounted troopers fought so desperately in the fall of 1914; Messines, sacred also to the memory of the cavalry and of the British and Indian infantry who tried hard to hold it; finally, the long, gently-sloping ridge which was reddened by the blood of the gallant London Scots when they bore up all night amid fire and flame against the ever-increasing pressure of the Bavarians—all these historic places came back once more into British keeping. It is this action, so splendid both in its execution and in its results, which we have now to examine, an action which was a quick sequel to the order of the German command that "the enemy must not get Messines Ridge at any price."

TURNING SIR HERBERT'S HAIR WHITE.

For two thankless years Sir Herbert Plumer, the officer who in his younger days had held on in such bulldog fashion to the country north of Mafeking, had been the warden of the Ypres salient. His task had been a peculiarly difficult and responsible one—indeed, many a military critic might have said *à priori* that it was an impossible one. The general outline of the British trenches formed a loop rather than a salient, and there was no point in it which could not be shot into from behind. Add to this that all the rising ground and, therefore, all the observation, lay with the enemy, and that the defending troops were very often skeleton divisions which had come up exhausted from the south. Taking all these circumstances together, one can understand the facts which turned General Plumer's hair white during these two years, but never for an instant weakened the determination of his defence. There was no one in the Army who did not rejoice, therefore, when it was learned that the Second Army had been chosen for the next attack, and that the long-suffering Plumer was at last to have a chance of showing that he could storm a line as well as hold one.

Preparatory to the attack, some twenty great mines had been driven into the long, low hill, which is really little more than a slope, attaining

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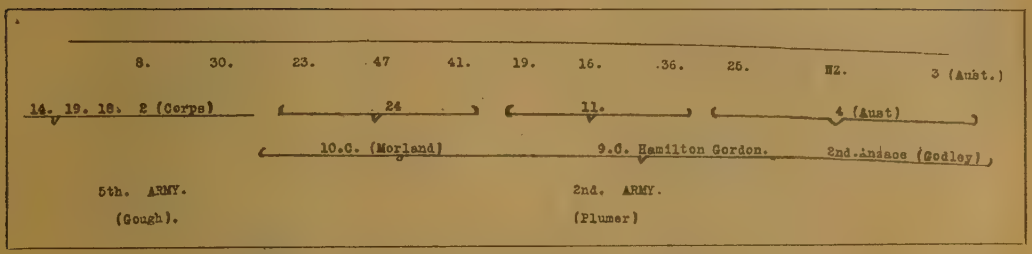

8. 30. 23. 47 41. 19. 16. 36. 25. NZ. 3 (Aust.)
14. 19. 18. 2 (Corps) 24 11. 4 (Aust)
10.C. (Morland) 9.C. Hamilton Gordon. 2nd.Anzacs (Godley)
5th. ARMY. (Gough).
2nd. ARMY. (Plumer)

ORDER OF BATTLE—MESSINES, JUNE 7th, 1917.

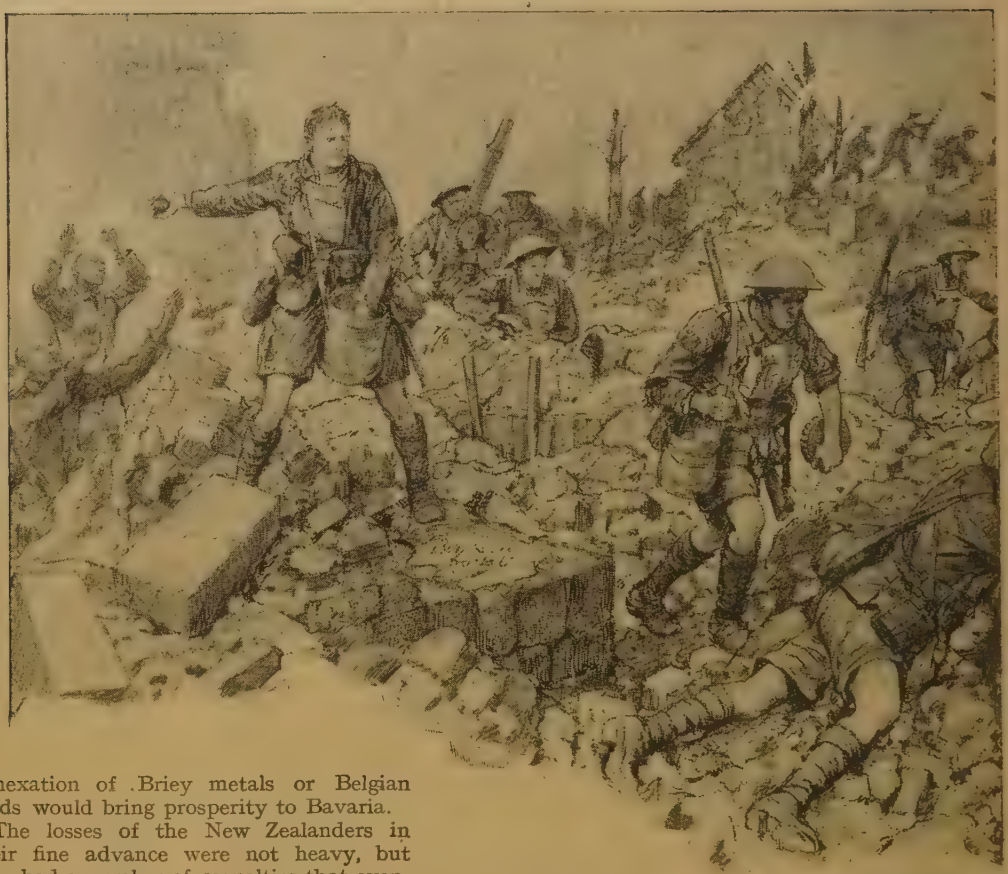
a height of two hundred and fifty feet at the summit. These mines contained six hundred tons of explosives, and had been the work of constant relays of miners during many months. The accumulation of guns was even greater than at Arras, and they were packed into about half the length of front, so that the effect of the massed fire when it broke out in the morning of June 7th was crushing to an extent never before known in warfare. What with the explosions of the mines and the downpour of shells, the German front line, with its garrison, may be said to have utterly disappeared, so that when at 3.20 in the first faint flush of a summer morning the infantry dashed forward to the attack, the path of victory had already been laid out before them. Let us examine the general composition of the British line before we follow the fortunes of the various units.

General Plumer's army had been moved down the line so as to cover all its objectives, and Gough's Fifth Army from the south had been put in to the north of it, occupying the actual salient. This Second Army was not in the first instance engaged. The Second Army consisted of three corps. The northern of these was the Tenth Corps (Morland), which was in the region of St. Eloi. This corps consisted, counting from the north, of the 23rd, 47th, and 41st Divisions, with the 24th in reserve. Upon its right, facing Wytschaete, was the Ninth Corps (Hamilton Gordon), containing, from the north, the 19th, 16th, and 36th Divisions, with the 11th in reserve. Still farther to the right was the Second Anzac Corps (Godley), facing Messines, with the 25th British Division, the New Zealanders, and the 3rd Australians in line from the north, and the 4th Australians in reserve. Such was the British line upon the eventful dawn of June 7th, 1917.

ADVANCE, AUSTRALIA !

To take the work of individual units, we shall begin with the 3rd Australian Division upon the extreme right. The men, like their comrades all along the line, had endured very heavy shelling in their assembly trenches, and sprang eagerly forward when the word to advance was given. The 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions had given so splendid an account of themselves already in the Hindenburg Line that it was no surprise to find that their mates were as battle-worthy as any troops in the Army. The whole country in front of them was drenched with gas, which hung heavy with the mists of morning, but the weird lines of masked men went swiftly onwards in open order through the poison region, dashed over the remains of the German trenches, crossing the small river Douve upon the way, and then, pushing on from one shot-shattered building to another, keeping well up to the roaring cloud of the barrage, occupied without a hitch the whole of their allotted position. With a single pause, while Messines was being occupied upon their left, the leading line of Victorians and Tasmanians drove straight on for their ultimate goal, sending back a stream of captured prisoners behind them. Only at one trench was there a sharp hand-to-hand fight, but in general so splendid was the artillery and so prompt the infantry that the enemy had never a chance to rally. It was a perfect advance and absolutely successful. Some indications of counter-attacks came up from the Warneton direction during the afternoon and evening, but they were beaten out so quickly by the shrapnel that they never came to a head. Half-a-dozen field-guns, as well as several hundred prisoners, fell to the lot of the Australians.

Upon the immediate left of the Australians was the New Zealand Division, which had done so splendidly at the Somme. Their Rifle Brigade had been given the place of honour exactly opposite to Messines, and by eight o'clock they had occupied the village and were digging in upon the farther side. Thirty-eight machine-guns and a number of prisoners were the trophies of their advance. There was no severe fighting, so well had the mines and the guns together done their work ; but the men who stormed the village found numerous cellars and dug-outs still occupied, into which they swiftly penetrated with bayonet or bomb. In one of these regimental head-quarters was found a message from General von Laffert ordering the 17th Bavarian Regiment to hold the village at all costs. It is certainly extraordinary how these unfortunate and gallant Bavarians were thrust into every hot corner, and if the reason lies in the fact that their Prince Rupprecht had the honour of commanding the German Army of Flanders, then it is an honour which will leave its grievous trace upon his country for a century to come. It is an extraordinary historical fact that the Bavarians, who were themselves overrun and crushed by the conquering Prussians in 1866, should have paid without demur the enormous blood tribute to their conquerors in a cause in which they had no direct interest, since no



BOMBERS AND LEWIS GUNNERS AT IN THE BATTLE

annexation of Briey metals or Belgian lands would bring prosperity to Bavaria.

The losses of the New Zealanders in their fine advance were not heavy, but they had a number of casualties that evening and next morning in their newly-consolidated position, which included, unfortunately, Brigadier-General Brown, one of the finest officers in the force, who was killed by a burst of shrapnel.

ADVANCE OF TWENTY-FIFTH DIVISION.

Upon the immediate left of the New Zealanders was the 25th, a sound, hard-working British division, which had a fine and a very long record of service upon the Somme. The task allotted to this division was a formidable one, consisting of an attack upon a twelve-hundred-yard front, which should penetrate three thousand yards and cross nine lines of German trenches, the concealed Steenebeek Valley, and finally crush the resistance of a number of fortified farms. In spite of these numerous obstacles, the advance, which was well covered by the guns, was splendidly successful. The 74th Brigade was on the right, the 7th upon the left, with the 75th in reserve. Observers have recorded how at the very instant that the men surged forward under their canopy of shells, six miles of S.O.S. rockets rose in one long cry for help from the German line. From the right, the British wave of stormers consisted of the 13th Cheshire, the 2nd Irish Rifles, the 3rd Worcesters, and the 8th North Lancashires, veterans of Ovillers and the Leipzig Redoubt. Keeping close behind a barrage of sixty guns, they flooded over the enemy trenches, just missing the answering barrage which came pattering down behind them. These troops advanced without a check to the line of the Steenebeek, where the work was taken up by the second wave, consisting of the 9th Lancashire, 11th Lancashire Fusiliers, 10th Cheshires, and 1st Wilts, the order being taken from the right. For a time there was a dangerous gap between the Wiltshires and the flank of the Ulstermen to the left, but this was bridged over, and the advance rolled on, with a constant capture of prisoners and machine-guns. Only at one point, named Middle Farm, was there a notable resistance, but the Lancashire Fusiliers and Irish Rifles combined to crush it. All this attack had been carried out in a dim light, half mist and half dust-laden from explosions, where obstacles were hardly seen until they were reached, and where it took fine leading and discipline to preserve direction, so that numbers of men lost touch with their own battalions and went forward as best they might. These are the times when shirkers have their chance and when the true individual quality of troops is most highly tested. Out of touch

CLOSE QUARTERS WITH THE ENEMY OF MESSINES.

with officers on either side, the British advanced and the Germans surrendered.

On the capture of all the first objectives the 8th South Lancashires and 11th Cheshires of the 75th Brigade passed through the victorious ranks of their fellow-brigades and pushed on against the strong October system of trenches beyond. The 8th Borderers followed closely behind, consolidating the ground won by the forward line. It was still only four in the morning. As the 75th Brigade swept forward, it found the 1st New Zealand Brigade upon its right and the 107th Ulster Division upon its left, all moving swiftly in one great line. By eight o'clock all immediate opposition had been beaten down, and the full objectives were being consolidated by the 106th Field Company Royal Engineers, five field-guns having been added to the other trophies. These might have been got away by the enemy had not the machine-guns knocked out the gun teams. The 110th and 112th Brigades of British artillery had been pushed up after the infantry, and though some delay was caused by the unfortunate destruction of Major Campbell and his whole battery staff by a single shell, the batteries were in action within the German lines by 11 a.m.

About midday a counter-attack began to develop along the front of the 2nd Anzac Corps, involving both British, New Zealanders, and Australians, but the blow already received had been too severe, and there was no resilience left in the enemy. The attempt died away under a withering fire from rifles and machine-guns, By 2 p.m. all was quiet once more.

The British effort was not yet at an end, however. The long summer day was still before them, and there was a good reserve division in hand. This was the 4th Australian Division, two brigades of which—the 12th on the left and the 14th on the right—passed through the ranks of the 25th and New Zealand Divisions about 3.15 p.m. Their objective was a further system of trenches five hundred yards to the east and well down the other slope of the Messines Hill. The advance of each brigade was admirable, but, unfortunately, they diverged, leaving a dangerous gap between, in which for two days a party of the enemy, with machine-guns, remained entrenched. At the end of that time two battalions of the 13th Australian Brigade, the 50th and 52nd, carried the place most gallantly by storm and solidified the line.

THE TWO IRISH DIVISIONS.

Passing from the area of the Anzac Corps to that of the Ninth Corps we come first upon the gallant 36th Ulster Division, which had not reappeared in any battle since its day of glory and of tragic loss in front of Thiepval. It was

now, by a happy chance or by a beneficent arrangement, fighting upon the right flank of the 16th Southern Irish Division, and the two may be treated as one, since they advanced, step by step, in the same alignment up the bullet-swept slope, and neither halted until they had reached their full objectives. The Ulstermen went forward with the 107th Brigade of Irish Rifles upon the right in close touch with the 25th Division, while the 108th was on the left, keeping line with their fellow-countrymen, both Irish divisions dashing forward with great fire and resolution.

The 16th Irish Division for the purpose of the attack consisted of four brigades, having been strengthened by the addition of the 33rd Brigade from the 11th Division. In the attack, the 47th Brigade was upon the right and the 49th upon the left. If some further detail may be permitted in the case of men who were playing so loyal a part at a time when part of Ireland had appeared to be so disaffected, it may be recorded that the Irish line, counting from the right, consisted of the 6th Royal Irish, the 7th Leinsters, the 7/8th Royal Irish Fusiliers, and the 7th Inniskilling Fusiliers. In this order they sprang up the Wytschaete slope, closely followed by their second line, which was formed by the 1st Munster Fusiliers, 6th Connaught Rangers, 2nd Royal Irish, and 8th Inniskillings. In this order, in close touch with the Ulstermen upon their right and the English 19th Division upon their left, they swept up the hill, their Celtic yell sounding high above the deep thunder of the guns. The explosion of the huge mines had a disconcerting effect at the first instant, for great masses of *débris* came showering down upon the men in the advanced positions, so that the dense smoke and the rain of falling earth and stones caused confusion and loss of direction. The effect was only momentary, however, and the eager soldiers dashed on. They swarmed over Wytschaete village and wood, beating down all resistance, which had already been badly shaken by the accurate fire of the guns. It was in the assault of the village that that great Irishman, Major Willie Redmond, fell at the head of his men. "He went in advance when there was a check. He was shot down at once. As he fell, he turned towards his men and tried to say something. No words came, but he made an eloquent gesture with his right arm towards the German line, and the Irish swept forward." The profound gratitude of every patriot is due to him, to Professor Kettle, to Mr. Stephen Gwynn, M.P., and to all those Nationalists who had sufficient insight to understand that Ireland's true cause was the cause of the Empire, and that it was the duty of every Irishman of all shades of opinion to uphold it in arms. *O si sic omnes!* An Irishman could then hold his head higher to-day, and Home Rule would have been endorsed by the cordial consent of all.

By 3.45 a.m. the first objective had been taken, and by five the second, save in front of the Leinsters, where there was a stout resistance at a German machine-gun post, which was at last overcome. It was at this period that a dangerous gap developed between the retarded wing of the right-hand brigade and the swiftly advancing flank of the left, but this opening was closed once more by seven o'clock. By seven-thirty the third objective had been cleared by the 1st Munsters on the right and the 2nd Irish Rifles on the left, for the second line had now leap-frogged into the actual battle. By eight o'clock everything had fallen and the field-guns of the 59th and 113th Brigades R.F.A. had been rushed up to the front, well screened by the slope of the newly-conquered hill. The new position was swiftly wired by the 11th Hants and a detachment of Royal Engineers.

There now only remained an extreme line which was, according to the original plan, to be the objective of an entirely new advance. This was the Oostaverne Line, so called from the hamlet of that name which lay in the middle of it. Its capture meant a further advance of two thousand yards, and it was successfully assaulted in the afternoon by the 33rd Brigade, consisting of the 7th South Staffords, 9th Sherwoods, 6th Lincolns, and 6th Borderers. It has been frequently remarked, and Guillemont might be quoted as a recent example, that both Englishmen and Irishmen never fight better than when they are acting together and all national difference is transmuted suddenly into generous emulation. So it was upon the field of Messines, for the advance of the 33rd Brigade was a worthy continuation of a splendid achievement. Keeping pace with the 57th Brigade of the 19th Division to their north, they dashed aside all obstacles, and by six o'clock were in complete possession of the farthest point which had ever been contemplated in the fullest ambition of the Generals.

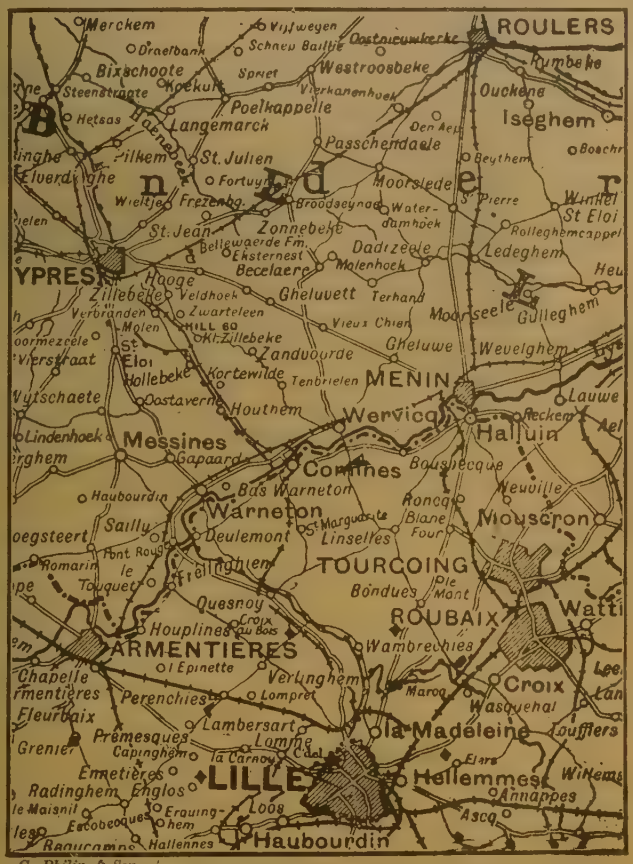
The enemy had been dazed by the terrific blow, but late in the evening signs of a reaction set in, for the German is a dour fighter, who does not sit down easily under defeat. It is only by recollecting his constant high qualities that one can appreciate the true achievement of the British in all this series of battles, Arras, Messines, and the Flanders Ridges, when pitchforking out of terribly-fortified positions the men who had so long been regarded as the military teachers and masters of Europe. Nerved by their consciousness of a truly national cause, the soldiers fought with a determined do-or-die spirit which has surely never been matched in all our military annals, while the sagacity and adaptability of the leaders were in the main worthy of the magnificence of the men. As an example of the insolent confidence of the Army, it may be noted that on this, as on other occasions, all arrangements had been made in advance for using the German dumps. "This should invariably be done," says an imperturbable official document, "as the task of rapidly getting forward Engineer stores is most difficult."

A number of ruined farms formed part of the new British line, and upon this there came a series of German bombing attacks upon June 8th, none of which met with success. The 68th Field Company of the Engineers had inverted the position, turning the defences from west to

east, and the buildings were held by the Lincolns and Sherwoods, who shot down the bombers before they could get within range even of the far-flying egg-bomb, which can out-fly the Mills by thirty paces, though its effect is puny in comparison with the terrific detonation of the larger missile. From this time onwards the line became permanent. In this long day of fighting the captures amounted to eight officers and seven hundred men, with four field-guns and four howitzers. The losses were moderate for such results, being eleven hundred men for the Irish and five hundred for the 33rd Brigade. Those of the Ulster Division were also about a thousand.

THE ADVANCE OF THE NINETEENTH DIVISION.

Upon the left of the Irishmen the advance had been carried out by the 19th Division, and it was, alas! the last operation which their gallant General Bridges was to command, since an unfortunate wound was shortly to deprive the country of valuable services which had covered such varied activities as the rallying of the retreat from Mons upon one side, and the conduct of a military mission to America upon the other. Few individuals have deserved better of their country during the Great War. Of his hard fighting division, the same which had carried La Boiselle upon the Somme, the 56th Lancashire Brigade and the 58th, mainly Welsh, were in the line. The advance was a difficult one, conducted through a region of shattered woods, but the infantry cleared all obstacles and kept pace with the advance of the Irish upon the right, finally sending forward their reserve Midland brigade as already stated to secure and to hold the Oostaverne Line. The ground to be traversed by this division, starting as it did from near Wulverghem, was both longer and more exposed than that of any other, and was particularly open to machine-gun fire. Without the masterful artillery the attack would have been an impossibility. None the less, the infantry was magnificently cool and efficient, widening the front occasionally to take in fortified posts which were just outside its own proper area. The 9th Cheshire particularly distinguished itself, gaining part of its second objective before schedule time and having to undergo a British barrage in consequence. This fine battalion ended its day's work by blowing to shreds by its rifle-fire a formidable counter-attack. The Welsh battalions of the same 58th Brigade, the 9th Welsh Fusiliers, 9th Welsh, and 5th South Wales Borderers, fought their way up through Grand Bois to the Oostaverne Line with great dash and gallantry. The village of that name was itself taken by the 19th Division, who consolidated their line so rapidly and well that the German counter-attack in the evening failed to make any impression.



G. Philip & Son.

THE SCENE OF THE FIGHTING DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT INSTALMENT.

ADVANCE OF MORLAND'S TENTH CORPS.

We have now roughly sketched the advance of the Ninth Corps and will turn to Morland's Tenth Corps upon its left. The flank division of this was the 41st. This unit, which was entirely English, and drawn mostly from the South country, had, as the reader may remember, distinguished itself at the Somme by the capture of Flers. They had several formidable obstacles in their immediate front, including the famous Dammstrasse, a long causeway which was either trench or embankment, according to the lie of the ground. An estaminet upon this road was a lively centre of contention and beyond this was Ravine Wood, with its lurking guns and criss-cross of wire. All these successive obstacles went down before the steady flow of the determined infantry, who halted at their farthest line in such excellent condition that they might well

have carried the attack forward had it not been prearranged that the 24th, the reserve division, should pass through their ranks, as will presently be described.

To the left of the 41st was the 47th London Territorial Division, containing the victors of Loos and of High Wood. The effect of the mines had been particularly deadly on this front, and one near Hill 60 is stated by the Germans to have taken up with it a whole company of Würtembergers. The position attacked by the Londoners was on each side of the Ypres-Comines Canal, and comprised some formidable obstacles, including a considerable wood and a ruined country-house named "The White Château." Again and again the troops were held up, but every time they managed to overcome the obstacle. Beside the ruined grandeur of the great villa, with all its luxuries and amenities looking strangely out of place amid the grim trimmings of rusty wire and battered cement, the Londoners came to hand-grips with the Prussians and Würtembergers who faced them. In all six hundred prisoners were sent to the rear.

To the left of the 47th London Division, and forming the extreme flank of the attack, was the 23rd Division of Contalmaison fame, a unit which was entirely composed of tough North of England material. It was in touch with the regular 8th Division upon the left, this being the flank division of the Fifth Army. The latter took no part in the present advance, and the 23rd had the task of forming a defensive flank in the Hooge direction, while at the same time it attacked and conquered the low ridges from which the Germans had so long observed our lines, and from which they had launched their terrible attack upon the Canadians a year before. No long advance was expected from this division, since the object of the whole day's operations was to flatten out an enemy salient, not to make one upon our own side. Sufficient ground was occupied, however, to cover the advance farther south, and without this advance it would have been impossible for the supporting division to carry on, without exposing its flank, the work which had been done by the two divisions upon the right. At three-ten in the afternoon the 24th Division advanced through the ranks of the 41st and 47th Divisions at a point due east of St. Eloi, its attack being synchronized with that upon the Oostaverne Line farther south. The operation was splendidly successful, for the 73rd Brigade upon the left and the 17th upon the right, at the cost of about four hundred casualties, carried that section of the Dammstrasse and the whole of the historic, blood-sodden ground upon either side of it, bringing it within the British line, and rounding off the complete victory of the Second Army. So close to the barrage was the advance of the infantry that the men of the 1st Royal Fusiliers and 3rd Rifle Brigade, who led the 17th Brigade, declared that they had the dust of it in their faces all the way.

THE RESULTS.

It was a one day's battle, a single hammer-blow upon the German line, with no ulterior operations save such as held the ground gained, but the battle has been acclaimed by all critics as a model and masterpiece of modern tactics, which show the highest power of planning and of execution upon the part of Sir Herbert Plumer and his able Chief of Staff. The main trophy, of course, was the invaluable Ridge, but in the gaining of it some seven thousand two hundred prisoners fell into British hands, including one hundred and forty-five officers, which gives about the same proportion to the length of front attacked as the Battle of Arras. The Germans had learned wisdom, however, as to the disposition of their guns in the face of "the unwarlike Islanders," so that few were found within reach. Sixty-seven pieces, however, some of them of large calibre, remained in possession of the victors, as well as two hundred and ninety-four machine-guns and ninety-four trench mortars. The military lesson of the battle has been thus summed up in the words of an officer who took a distinguished part in it: "The sight of the battlefield, with its utter and universal desolation stretching interminably on all sides, its trenches battered out of recognition, its wilderness of shell-holes, *débris*, tangled wire, broken rifles, and abandoned equipment, confirms the opinion that no troops, whatever their *morale* or training, can stand the fire of such overwhelming and concentrated masses of artillery. With a definite and limited objective and with sufficient artillery, complete success may be reasonably guaranteed." It is the big gun, then, and not, as the Germans claimed, the machine-gun, which is the Mistress of the Battlefield. The axiom laid down above is well proved, but it works for either side, as was soon to be proved, where upon a limited area the weight of metal was with the Germans and the defence with the British.

So fell Messines Ridge. Only when the British stood upon its low summit and looked back upon the fields to westward did they realize how completely every trench and post had been under German observation during these years. No wonder that so much of the best blood of Britain has moistened that fatal plain between Ypres in the north and Ploegsteert in the south. "My God!" said an officer as he looked down, "it is a wonder that they let us live there at all." "It is great to look eastwards," said another, "and see the land falling away, to know that we have this last height and have wrested it from them in three hours." It was a nightmare which was lifted from the Army upon June 7th, 1917.

DAVID AND JONATHAN.

By E. TEMPLE THURSTON.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

David Mortlake and John Hawkesley—hereinafter called David and Jonathan, as they were in their friendship at school—are shipwrecked and washed ashore on a tropical beach, with the only other survivor, a girl named Joan, as their sole companion. They lead a "Swiss Family Robinson" kind of life until, with the dawning of love, a new element of distrust enters into the situation. Things come to such a pass between the two men that a fight seems the only solution. In spite of Joan's protests, David says: "I believe we're both longing for the moment to come, to get at it and settle it once and for all. We fought when we were kids at school. Why shouldn't we fight now?"

PART III.

CHAPTER XV.

WITH the first sight Jonathan had of the creek on his return his eyes were swift to seek out Joan and David.

At that moment, far from expecting him back so soon, they were standing by the *Malaga's* boat. Joan had followed David down the steps into the creek, and, using other methods than pleading, was still trying to win from him the promise she needed. Her hand was on his shoulder. She was looking up earnestly into his face. This was what Jonathan saw. Small wonder was it that there sped across his mind the memory of that day when, after the death of Sam, the tree-bear, he had seen her in David's arms.

What control he must have used to force the casual note into his voice as he shouted out, "Halloa, there! Here's your supper for you!" can easily be supposed. What he felt when he saw their surprise and observed her hand being swiftly withdrawn from David's shoulder needs little imagination either.

Jonathan's eyes were flaming as they came towards him, and Joan must have known in that moment there was little hope but in the issue as David had drawn it for her. She could hear every effort of restraint in his voice. There was no mistaking, even for the meanest intelligence, that glitter of determination in his eyes.

That night at supper she kept up with amazing courage the farce of behaving as though not a thought of tragedy were hanging over them.

In all the time they had been there David had at intervals amused himself by carving a set of chessmen and, somewhat cunningly for him, constructing a board with squares of a dark and light wood. They played occasionally—often at first—but lately had not touched the game for three or four weeks.

To this amusement and distraction of their minds she brought them that evening, and, as though in some sense in both their minds it was like a consulting of the oracle, they consented to her persuasions.

It was a long game. With all the concentration he possessed Jonathan gave his mind to it, but he was no match for David's intuitive impulses and clearer vision of thought. Again and again he violently attacked, and after each onslaught with the most powerful pieces, found he had lost, if not in men then in position. Gradually and inevitably David wore him down to sure defeat. Jonathan at last was left with his king, knight, and three pawns. David with king, castle, bishop, and a single pawn.

For one moment, with the exchange of pieces forced by David which had brought this situation about, they looked up from the board into each other's eyes, and there was no mistaking the quiet expression of triumph in David's face.

"Like to chuck it now?" said he.

"Chuck it up!" Jonathan exclaimed. "Good Lord! What for? I've got three pawns!"

"Right-o!" said David, amiably. "Your move."

But from that moment, as even Joan could see, who knew no more of the game than from watching them play it, it was a hopeless and one-sided business. Step by step, move by move, David pressed his opponent into disadvantage. One by one his pawns were taken, yet even when he was left with his knight alone he almost foolishly held on.

Once he looked up, asking Joan if it were not past her time for clearing off, and almost thought she must be sitting there to watch for the moment of his discomfiture. He did not know she had deeper purpose for her delay than that.

At last David made a queen of his pawn and in three moves the game was ended.

"Thanks," said Jonathan, and no more.

It was beyond the power of her invention to find excuse for staying after that, and slowly

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Joan rose to her feet. They returned her good night, and at the door, as she went out, she turned, saying, "God bless you!" with the odd suspicion of a catch in her voice which neither of them could have failed to notice.

For a while after she had gone Jonathan sat there doing nothing while David in silence put away the chessmen. Having done this, he was just about to go into their bedroom, when Jonathan spoke.

"I think it's about time," he said, with suppressed emotion, "that we came to some sort of understanding. It seems simple enough to me, and just depends on your answer."

"What's that?"

"Are you in love with Joan?" Jonathan asked.

"Yes," replied David.

"Well—so am I," said Jonathan.

"I'm quite aware of that," David said.

"Yes, you always fancied you knew what was passing in people's minds," Jonathan exclaimed, sarcastically.

David returned from the bedroom door and sat down at the table.

"Look here, Jonathan," he began, slowly, "that's the second time to-day you've hit at me with words."

"Which was the first?"

"When you said that bitter thing about my being merely an unskilled labourer with no right to a voice in what it amused you to call our board of directors. That was the first time. That hurt more than this, and before we go an inch farther in the whole of this business I'm going to remind you that we've been the best of friends, and that words won't settle the matter one way or another. What's more, you know they won't, even better than I. And it seems to me that words like that are dirty things between us two, so let's keep 'em out. If anything makes it worth while to keep it clean, she does."

"Well—you're so infernally superior with your subtleties and your understanding," Jonathan replied, hotly. "It's as much as I can do to put up with it."

"I have to put up with your superiority of ability," David answered him. "You may not fling it in my face, but I fling nothing in yours. It's how we see each other, and isn't that, or what we actually are, the crux of the whole thing?"

Jonathan went to the door and flung it open, as though the atmosphere in that room were suffocating him.

"I'm in no fit state of mind to argue about it," he said, presently looking round. "You're always ready for an argument. I suppose you think you could argue me out of my state of mind; just as I expect you fancied winning at that game of chess was a symbol of your rights. But if you remember, I told you once when we were starting out on this trip that there were no symbols where we were going. Gosh! I little knew how true that was going to be. That game of chess was no symbol——"

"I never thought it was," interposed David.

"And no more," continued Jonathan, without listening to his interruption—"and no more will argument settle the business for us now. You can't talk round a thing like this. Talk! Good God! Talk and tears—that's a woman's job!"

David rose quickly to his feet. The whole issue hung upon a thread, and had not Joan's blessing with that quaint catch in her voice sounded in his mind, recalling all her pleading for that promise he had never given, he must have brought it to its crisis then. Even Jonathan turned to the look in his eyes, ready for the blow; then laughed when he heard it was still to be words.

"I've said all that a little while ago," said David, with an effort. "I've told you words won't settle it. Your repetitions of what I've said only add more words. I'm merely supposing that we're not just animals with nothing more than appetites to gratify. We're sufficiently civilized to observe a few formalities. You asked me a question in the first instance. I presume you expected it to be answered with words. If I'd spat in your face you might have considered I'd lost some sense of the fitness of things. By what you say, you wouldn't; but I'm not taking much notice of that."

Jonathan dropped his hand from the door and strode with three steps to David's side.

"Look here, you're not going to talk to me like that!" he shouted. "With your confounded superior intelligence!"

David's eyes met his with a straightness no man could have utterly ignored.

"You'll listen to every word I have to say," he said, clearly, "because you know well enough I'm not going to deny you your chance with your fists. I sha'n't cheat you of that, and you won't be such a cad as to cheat me."

One long moment they stayed as they looked in each other's eyes, and then Jonathan sat down.

"What have you got to say?" he asked.

David closed the door and came back to the table.

"I had my opportunity to-day," he began. "All the time you've been away we've been talking. I'm not going to tell you what we said. That's my affair. I can claim that much. But what I want you to recognize is this. It's a damnable position for her. You can't think she likes it. You can guess well enough she knows the pass we've got to. There's scarcely a woman that's a fool in these matters."

"What a deuce of a lot you know about women!" exclaimed Jonathan, ironically; and David laughed.

"Not so much as you do about fish," said he. "Come on—don't let's get childish over it. That's the case. That's what I want to say. She hates the position she's in. I can tell you that much. Well—I've had my chance with her, and I can't alter it. Before we come to this"—he shrugged his shoulders with a smile—"settlement of it you take your chance. I'll go down to the beach to-morrow and leave you two alone. There were no restrictions upon me when you went this morning. I don't propose

any restrictions upon you. You're free to act as you think best, and if that doesn't settle it—then anywhere or any time you like. I don't care. The sooner the better. I can't stand this odour of hatred between us any more than you can. Now, you needn't worry yourself any more about my infernal superiority. That's all the talk you'll get from me."

Jonathan looked at him across the table, and one can almost believe he felt an admiration for David then, for he rose to his feet, saying, "'All right—that seems fair," and held out his hand.

For an instant David looked at it, then back into Jonathan's eyes.

"I don't want your hand," said he. "You've got your chances and it can't take much to make you believe I don't love you for 'em. Let's get to bed."

"'I DON'T WANT YOUR HAND,' SAID DAVID. 'YOU'VE GOT YOUR CHANCES, AND IT CAN'T TAKE MUCH TO MAKE YOU BELIEVE I DON'T LOVE YOU FOR 'EM.'"

CHAPTER XVI.

NOTWITHSTANDING the unsolicited generosity of his offer, David left them the next morning in no little despondency of mind. He was giving Jonathan his chance, and in his heart he believed it better than his own.

So he was weighed down in spirit until, as he drove the canoe out of those tall sea-grasses that separated the forest from the beach and came into the open channel, his eyes were filled with the sight of something which for the moment wrenched every other thought out of his mind. About a couple of miles out there lay a British gunboat, flying that flag it seemed he had not seen for years and years.

He could see a boat putting off from her side, the glitter of the line of oars in the sunshine as they dipped in and out of the water, the white figures of British bluejackets bending to them as they rowed. There was nothing to do but to wait for them, and words almost fail to describe what he felt.

The thought which seized upon him first of all, seeing how near it was to his mind, was that this was the solution to all their difficulties. Then swift upon that came the return of those sensations he

had had when they had made their attempt to escape through the forest and Jonathan had talked in hours of the moment of their release. Then he had felt his chance, in the normal surroundings of civilization, would be triumphantly established. So he felt then, seeing that gunboat lying out there; watching those oars glittering and vanishing, glittering and vanishing in the sunshine. Fate, luck—whatever it was, had turned the balance of events richly in his favour. For Jonathan, once he was released, would return to his roving habits once more. The opportunities would all be his, and the prospect of wooing her, as he knew he could, was one which thrilled him in the joy of its promise.

But then there fell upon his mind the pledge he had given to Jonathan, that he should have his chance of that day alone with her, beyond which was his still greater test, which only a few moments before had seemed the inevitable outcome of the whole affair. And here a stroke of luck had robbed him of it. In civilized environments again it was ridiculous to suppose it could be settled that way. In civilized environments the choice again would be with her. The whole rights of custom gave it to her, and in what light would she regard Jonathan then? How would his qualities, so much in evidence in that creek, show to advantage in a London drawing-room? Last of all, David knew that Jonathan was hit just as hard as he, and but for this trick of fortune turning up on the board of chance would have won her. Irrevocably she would have been his.

So came the second phase of his sensations, as the little boat came dancing over the blue waters towards the edge of the surf. These second thoughts were the hardest of all to argue with. Certainly the fortune was not of his seeking, glad though he may have been it had come his way. But had it been in his power, would he have chosen it? That was a tricky question. He tried to put it to himself as straight as he could. Would he have taken the chance of solving their problem, the odds of which were accumulated heavily against him, by such easy means as these? Without any false sentiment about it, would he have slipped out of the prospects of that fight had it been in the power of his will to avoid it? He had to admit this much, that he would have despised himself for ever if he had.

Yet how could this be helped? It was not of his seeking. The turn of the dice had come his way. Obviously it would be insane to refuse this opportunity of escape. He must break into that promise he had given Jonathan that he should be alone with her all day. He must snatch from him his overwhelming chances to beat him in a fair fight. He had accepted that fight. In refusing to shake hands with Jonathan the night before he had proudly accepted it, asking for nothing but hatred and enmity between them both.

Now the ship's boat had reached the surf and they were gallantly struggling with the wash of the tumbling waves. He stood there watching her. They had seen him now. But none of his thoughts were with their efforts. He knew they would come in safe enough. He knew they would get back again to the ship. All those moments as they came sweeping in towards shore David was wrestling with a new thought which, like a bolt out of that blue above him, had pierced into his mind.

Supposing he went alone, leaving them to the unhampered decision of Fate? It was an honest way out of it. In some respects it was better for Jonathan, since he would not have been responsible for David's elimination from the tangle of it all. Then indeed, and doubtless in a mighty short time, she would know if she really loved him. In just as short a time, giving advice at the first port they stopped at, he could have chartered a boat to go and take them off.

By the time the boat had come near enough for him to wade in and give a hand his mind was made up to it. Without the sense that one has acted honestly in the light of one's own principles, the greatest passion has a taste about it that can be evil in the mind. He was giving Jonathan his chance, as he made no doubt he would have given him his if he had found him at a disadvantage in their fight.

As the boat came in and he felt the touch of her, felt also the grip of the officer's hand in his, he reckoned the decision he had brought himself to was not wholly without its compensations.

"My God! You've had a thick time of it," said the officer. "How long have you been here?"

David shook his head.

"What ship was it?"

"The *Malaga*," he managed to stammer out.

"Lord! That's what we thought. Getting on eight months."

"Eight months!" David muttered, and could not be sure in his mind whether it seemed short or a lifetime.

"Do you mean to say you've been here all alone—no others?"

David shook his head—he could not trust his voice.

During those three days while he was on his way back to Teneriffe David composed a letter to Joan, intending it to be delivered to her by the rescue-party in whatever ship he could arrange to go.

"My dear," he wrote, "I am sure you have wondered much and thought often, perhaps, that I shirked at the last moment that issue which was to have decided so much in my life, if not, perhaps, in yours. You will realize by now that I have not just meanly slipped out of it, but have intended rather to leave it all to the unaltered conditions of that same Fate which brought us all together and threatened so nearly to divide us in the end.

"I had all and more than all my chances with you. I am given to talking my mind. Jonathan is not. And I had had many opportunities, yet had not won you. In these few days, therefore, while you have been alone with him, and he has no doubt said what is in his heart, you will have been free to learn

"'YOU'VE HAD A THICK TIME OF IT,' SAID THE OFFICER. 'HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?'"

much of what I have strongly suspected was in your heart all the time, though you could not know it.

"Do you remember saying God's blessing to us that night before I went away? Well, here I repeat it to you, knowing that unless you want me you will not send for me or write to me again. "DAVID."

CHAPTER XVII.

JONATHAN made no bones about admitting the fact that it was by David's suggestion they were left alone that day. It probably helped him in breaking down that reserve he felt in speaking to her on any other than the most ordinary topics.

In a stilted but honest and genuine fashion he told her that he loved her, to which Joan listened,

"SUDDENLY HE PUT HIS ARMS ROUND HER, AND IN THE CONTACT OF HER BODY WITH HIS OWN WAS FOR THE MOMENT LOST TO EVERYTHING BUT THE WHIRLWIND OF HIS EMOTIONS."

never answering by so much as a touch of the hand and employing far more restraint than ever she had shown with David.

He must have taken that silence in the light of submission. Suddenly he put his arms round her, and in the contact of her body with his own was for the moment lost to everything but the whirlwind of his emotions.

Easily it can be imagined she was startled and numbed in her surprise. More easily still can it be realized she was powerless to move in those arms of his. And there for a moment she lay while he spent his kisses on her face and neck.

It must be remembered David had put no restraint upon him. He had told him of no one

word they had said while they were alone together the day before.

A moment later he had set her free, and, breathless, she pushed the hair back from off her forehead, staring in front of her and saying no word at all, much as they say an animal stares into the hypnotic eyes of the boa-constrictor when she has chosen her prey.

But it was circumstance she was gazing at, not at Jonathan. Not one word of reproof did she utter, but slowly, after a moment, she rose to her feet.

All this time he had watched her, groping with his mind to reach hers. And now in this silence he found himself hopelessly in the confusion of an utter darkness. He did not know whether he had offended her or not. On that impulse of doubt he overwhelmed her with his apologies.

"You're not hurt—you're not offended, are you?" he cried. "I love you. I told you that. Can I help what I feel? Good God! I'm sorry if I've offended you. I wouldn't do that for the world. I thought from the way you listened, saying nothing, that you understood; would know I must be longing—to have you in my arms. Joan—are you offended?"

She turned and faced him, pleading there like a child in his remorse for what he had done, and it must have been inevitable in her mind to make comparison between him and David then. All of a sudden he was as Samson shorn of his locks. So it seemed to her, with full intent, must Delilah have stolen the secret of that man of strength. In that moment she knew she could tell him to do for her whatever she wished and he would straightway have done it.

But more profoundly than this, it was never him she looked at. Even when he began to realize the possibility that he had mistaken her from the beginning, asking her whether it were David she cared for most, and she answered, "Don't you realize I have no choice?" it was circumstance she was answering, not him.

"David's been telling you that sort of nonsense as well, has he?" he replied. "He said that to me last night—that you had no choice—but it's all rot. However, he likes to think he understands women, and if you like to agree with him I can't help that. But it's futile to me. You've only to lift your little finger and I'd——"

She stopped him quickly.

"You'd give me David?" said she.

At the mere sound of David's name on her lips all expression of apology vanished from his face.

"No," said he. "Do you imagine I would? Do you think I could go on calmly here, you two living together and I labouring, slave to both of you and your happiness? Is that the way out of it which David suggested? If it is, it's not surprising that he failed."

"David didn't suggest anything of the kind," she replied. "He knew you would neither of you consent to that. There was only one alternative that he could see."

"What was that?"

"That you must fight."

Jonathan nodded his head. Obviously over that matter there was nothing to be said. It was all to do.

"Would you suppose from that, then," she suggested, "that it leaves me with much choice?"

His silence was his answer.

"So David was right after all?" she persisted.

He waited a moment, smarting under a sense of impotence.

"Oh, I suppose David's always right," he said, at length. "At every turn I come up against that superior intelligence of his—but I doubt whether the circumstances call for it here."

The test was needed, as David had said, to prove to her which was master of their destinies, and automatically, without any of the fears she had entertained, that test was applied. When after waiting overlong for David's return to the creek, they both made their way down to the beach, found the canoe and found it empty, there was only one conclusion remaining for them to draw. David had acknowledged his defeat in the trial of strength. He had fulfilled her wishes. There would be no struggle between them. He had decided the issue himself.

The tide had come in, washing out all signs of the footprints they had left upon the sand. There was the empty canoe. She needed no further proof of the course he had taken; and then she must have known—but not till then.

CHAPTER XVIII.

For the next few days at the creek both Joan and Jonathan were too oppressed with the loss of David to speak at all of those circumstances which, so far as they knew, had brought that loss about. Jonathan pursued his duties, Joan hers, with a cloud upon their spirits, the meaning of which in her he could have been under no misapprehension.

In all honesty, he must have admitted himself, he felt the absence of his friend. To whatever straits of circumstance they may have been driven that night before his disappearance, there still had been the sure foundation of their friendship. Nothing could have altered that; nor could anything detract from that spirit of what in moments of anger he had chosen to call David's "confounded superior intelligence."

Both of them missed it, as one would miss a season were it stolen from the fullness of the year. A thousand times over Jonathan thanked his God that he had not been the instrument of that rift of absence in their little community. Had David heard those thanksgivings, notwithstanding all the misapprehensions on which they were based, he would have known he had done right.

The test of it all had been made, and, without any of the remorse he must inevitably have felt, Jonathan must sometimes have been of the mind that David in losing had won. Yet as the days went by and David's absence became an accepted fact with which they must make the best of life as it was, the ultimate resolution of Fate must have appeared inevitable to both of them. And then—a bolt out of the blue as it had been with David—there came their release.

With a leaping of their hearts, one morning as they sat at breakfast they heard the shouting of voices, English voices, in the forest. As if a meteor out of heaven had fallen between them, they jumped to their feet. They were saved!

The first thing Joan realized of the reality of their escape was David's letter, which was handed to her, as he had desired it, as soon as the explanation of that relief-party was given. She kept it unopened in her hand all the while until she was on board, and then, in the silence and seclusion of her own cabin, she opened it and read its contents.

That evening, walking up and down the deck, she talked it all out with Jonathan. There must have been some complete upheaval in her mind at the realization that David had not made way for Jonathan, but had himself escaped. She could not blame him. But the remorse she had felt about his death was no longer there. A great gap had suddenly been rent in her mind, and as yet there was nothing to fill it. She had conceived the whole Romance, as she had thought it was, and now, all in a swift moment, it had become a different matter altogether.

"Well, we're all free now," said she, meditatively, as she leant on the taffrail. "And what's going to happen now, I wonder?"

She had told him the substance of David's letter. There was no call upon her to tell him the last words with which it ended. In reply to that half-inferred question of hers Jonathan said nothing. He was thinking eagerly of the new life in front of him, when she wrenched him from his thoughts.

"Do you still feel the same about me now, Jonathan?" she asked.

The pause before he answered was as slight as to the bricklayer must be the thickness of a hair, but to the architect working his drawings to a scale, the sixteenth of an inch, made all the difference in the world. In such a situation she was that architect, dealing with inflexions and expressions on the minutest scale.

When he answered quickly and emphatically that he had not changed one whit, it was that pause she heard more deeply than the genuine admission in his voice. She changed the subject then, and half an hour later went below to her cabin.

At Teneriffe she secured a berth on a steamer going south.

"I am going to finish my voyage," she said to Jonathan. "My father will think I've gone down with the *Malaga*. I've cabled him I'm coming by the next boat."

She held out her hand, and once more in his life the Blue Peter fluttered down from the masthead.

CHAPTER XIX.

About five months later, in the late spring, when the two friends had long since met, finding, as it seemed to them then, that such friendship as theirs was after all greater than the love of women; when Jonathan had gone abroad again for his company and David was drifting back once more into London life, there arrived a letter at the Albany, brought to David with his morning tea.

"My father," he read, "has retired from business in South Africa and returned to England. We have bought a house here in the heart of the real country. All this has happened in five months, and if nothing prevents you, we should like to see you here for a few days. I shall quite understand if you find it impossible to get away, and, supposing that may be very likely, I take this opportunity of thanking you for all your kindness and understanding."

David leapt out of bed. In half an hour he was eating breakfast. In another hour he was in the train with a telegram preceding him. That afternoon he found himself driving down a long drive, cut through a wood, grass banks on either side freckled with cowslips, and a cuckoo calling its first April note through the green tracery of the trees.

They had tea on the lawn. The first day hot enough in the year. To all her father's inquiries, and her joggings of his memory, they went through most of that story again. Together, but alone then, when the meal was over, they went through the garden.

"To show you," said she, "what I call a home—an English home."

It was all cut out, a clearing in the heart of the wood, with long grass alleys through the high beech-trees, just broken in leaf, leading to kitchen gardens, tennis lawns, and rose and herbaceous borders.

They talked of commonplaces; of what each of them had done during those five months; of how Jonathan had set off on his travels again and what part of the world he was then faring in.

It seemed almost as though in those surroundings and with those days in the creek so far behind them they were strangers, met formally for the first time.

This, however, was not David's way of thought when his mind was not in doubt. In one of those alleys, hidden from the house, he stopped her as they walked.

"This is not us," he said. "I always say the man who acts before he's sure is thirty times a fool. And the man who dallies when his heart is certain—how many times a fool do you imagine he must be?"

She tried to laugh as though she did not follow the line of his thought. She tried to ask him what he meant by suddenly saying that.

"I suppose you've waited these five months," he replied, "to see how far circumstances would alter cases. Well, mine was a hard case. It doesn't alter those."

Then he took her face in his hands, and he added:—

"This is the first time in reality out of the thousands of times I've kissed you in my mind."

THE END.

IF OUR CARICATURISTS HAD FLOURISHED BEFORE!

Some of the Drawings They Might Have Made.

By ADRIAN MARGAUX.

THE art of caricature, as we know it at the present time, did not flourish until the latter part of the eighteenth century. Had it been otherwise how much history would have gained from its interpretation of character! How much would be paid to-day for caricatures of such personages as Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII., Cromwell and Charles II., Richard III. and Queen Elizabeth by contemporary Max Beerbohms or "F.C.G.'s," Phil Mays or Pellegrinis! If they had been permitted to exercise their talents freely—which it is to be feared they would not—their pencils might have proved powerful weapons in influencing the course of history. These reflections led us to speculate upon the comparative popularity which leading historical characters would have enjoyed among our humorous artists of to-day. Which among them would have appealed the most to their sense of burlesque and their appreciation of distinctive physical characteristics? Out of all the portrait-gallery of history which would they have chosen as giving most opportunities to pictorial satire? We have put the question to a number of representative black-and-white humorists—and this article is the result.

Henry VIII. turns out to be a great favourite, which was perhaps almost to be expected of "Bluff King Hal." He is the choice of Mr. Bert Thomas and Mr. G. L. Stampa. Mr. Stampa said he had never even thought of caricaturing historical characters, but if he did his "first shot" would be at Henry VIII. Mr. Bert Thomas gives an explicit reason for his choice: "He appeals to me as one of the unconsciously funny figures of history with his overbearing manners and lack of finesse in his dealings with the opposite sex. Really he is a caricature himself—as done by Holbein. I would prefer to do not merely a figure but to illustrate an episode connected with his misspent life—of course with him in it." And so we have Mr. Thomas's conception of "Playful Hal" presenting his Queen with a pretty toy and showing her its works! (1.) Mr. Stampa, on the other hand, presents us with the king in his most jovial mood, smoking an enormous cigar with the self-satisfaction of a prosperous stockbroker. (2.) The historical licence will be readily forgiven him, but it may be a matter for argument whether, if tobacco had been introduced into England a hundred years sooner, Henry VIII. was the sort of man to have become an enthusiastic devotee of My Lady Nicotine!

1. PLAYFUL HAL!
BY BERT THOMAS.

Charles II., Queen Elizabeth, and Sir Walter Raleigh are also much in favour.

"My choice," says "Poy," the caricaturist of the *Evening News*, "has fallen upon His late lamented Majesty King Charles II., because it is authentically said of him that

2. KING HENRY VIII.
BY G. L. STAMPA.

he did 'frequently take the air of a morning in St. James's Park.' Now other men may have conquered worlds, discovered continents, or invented butter substitutes, but it seems to me that the man who did 'frequently take the air of a morning in St. James's Park' performed an act of such surpassing faith and courage as to command for all time our wonder and admiration. So I have endeavoured to depict him in his natural habitat and best cambric whatyoumacallums. Anyone can tell it is St. James's Park from the pelican pool in the background. Those funny beetle-like creatures in the foreground are King Charles's spaniels. Besides being pictorially

4. THE MERRY MONARCH.
BY W. HEATH ROBINSON.

3. KING CHARLES II.
BY 'POY.'

effective they let you know at once who the gentleman with them is supposed to be. This is a most important point, because if the artist can make his picture recognizable without tying on a label he scores one and moves up. I forgot to mention that the tree in the left middle distance is a faithful representation of that famous oak which has since become a 'chestnut'! "Poy," it will be noticed, does not mention the topical touch he has given to the drawing by the inscription, "Raid Shelter," on the tree. (3.)

Mr. W. Heath Robinson explains his selection simply with the remark that in his opinion, of all historical characters, the figure of Charles II. "lends itself most admirably to caricature." It will be seen that Mr. Heath Robinson has drawn the Merry Monarch with the most elaborate and exaggerated details, with a huge befeathered hat and curled locks that extend to the length of his richly-ornamented doublet. (4.)

The preference of Mr. Alfred Leete hesitated between Queen Elizabeth—"with all her faults she must have been a good subject for caricature"—Charles II., and William the Conqueror,

5. QUEEN ELIZABETH.
BY ALFRED LEETE.

"who would be funny if treated as the schoolboy's bugbear." Mr. Alfred Leete gives this quaint explanation of his caricature :—

"The full old party with the dish-papers round her neck is meant to be Queen Elizabeth. In her left hand she has one of the dish-papers, with the impression of hot flat-iron in centre. The loving couple in middle distance are supposed to be the court firewood contractor and the laundry-maid, who is about to be beheaded for scorching the dish-paper. (5.)

"The scorching of this dish-paper made the Queen, who was a nasty, bad-tempered cat, very ratty, as it was the only one she had left to wear at a rather swell bun-fight to which she was going with Sir Walter Raleigh, who was the lion of the moment, as he had just defeated the 'U' boats by discovering the potato. Otherwise no doubt she would have seen how silly it was to get ratty over such a trifle, ordered another dozen dish-papers, and let the girl marry the court firewood contractor."

Mr. David Wilson picked out Sir Walter Raleigh on very interesting personal grounds.

"Raleigh," he says, "has always been my favourite character in history, that is, since I dipped into history—for fun. His life was 'so full of a number of things' that count. He stood for the imaginative and glowing side of English exploration, and he died as he lived—with a flourish.

"Caricaturists owe him a personal debt, for it is easy to imagine that the first caricaturists found their 'motif' in the curves and spirals emanating from that bowl which cheers without inebriating. It is over the last pipe o' nights that the most 'caricatury' caricatures shape themselves and artists dream the dreams which take line and substance to themselves on the morrow's morn. That at least is my experience." (6.)

Quite as curious in its way is the reason given by Captain W. Allen Howells (as the "Owl" of the comic page is known in the Army), for his choice of the same Elizabethan worthy: "I should like to do Sir Walter Raleigh, as I have an idea he was one of the pioneers of 'camouflage' in this country. A French slang dictionary tells me that the word means blowing smoke through a paper cone into another person's face as an insult, and I can imagine Sir Walter making use of the device between his draws of tobacco smoke." (7.)

A good deal of the comic spirit has been given by Mr. Charles Harrison to his drawing of Julius Cæsar. (8.) At the same time Mr. Harrison has succeeded in preserving

6. SIR WALTER RALEIGH.
BY DAVID WILSON.

7. SIR WALTER RALEIGH.
BY "OWL."

8. JULIUS CÆSAR.
BY CHARLES HARRISON.

the essential characteristics of the Roman conqueror of Britain as they have become familiar to us by statuary. Cæsar, it may be added, was the alternative in the artist's mind to "the king who never smiled again"—Henry I.—Shakespeare, and Dr. Johnson. Mr. Will Owen has also gone to a similarly remote period for his selection—Boadicea, Queen of the Ancient Britons (9); whilst Mr. Arthur Moreland went as far back as the thirteenth century in order to find the historical equivalent of the favourite living subject of caricature—Attila, the Hun. (10.) "A recent research into German history," says Mr. Moreland, "has revealed the fact that the Kaiser and Attila had many points in common, and a caricature of the one is a caricature of the other. Megalomania is a leading feature of both, as is a condescending tolerance of the Almighty. Attila assumed the title of 'the scourge of God' and did his best to justify it."

Mr. H. M. Bateman stands alone in choosing Napoleon. However, he only made this nomination after it had been pointed out to him that

9. THE BOA—D'YE SEE HER?
(Boadicea—Queen of the Ancient Britons.)
BY WILL OWEN.

10. ATTILA, THE HUN.
BY ARTHUR MORELAND.

"Buffalo Bill" hardly came within the category of historical characters as understood for the purpose of this article. "He is not, of course," admitted Mr. Bateman, "as weighty as an Emperor or a Field-Marshal, but he is a glorious fellow to draw."

Napoleon, it need hardly be said, lived within the period during which celebrities have paid the penalty of their greatness to the caricaturist. In fact, probably no man, living or dead, has received more attention at his hands—and in England, at least, the caricatures usually took the form of pictorial lampoons. Mr. Bateman, it will be seen, has treated the features of the great soldier much more kindly than Rowlandson or Gillray. In fact, some of our readers will probably consider his drawing too much of a portrait and too little of a caricature. (11.)

11. NAPOLEON.
BY H. M. BATEMAN.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 54.

Whether as fruits or vegetables known,
For human food within our gardens grown.

1. "He spake of" it, but when he had begun,
Desisted, for he felt "that earth had none."
2. Most of the bird is here; you will not fail
To notice that it lacks both head and tail.
3. Of missing letters words may be bereft,
But now the missing word is what is left.
4. Logician knows the lady's name; but here
One or two letters have to disappear.
5. One letter leaves a place in Italy
Well known to those who study history.
6. An Eastern province rearrange, and read
The famous man whose other name we need.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 54 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on November 8th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

With their answers to this acrostic, solvers must send also their real names and addresses.

ANSWER TO No. 52.

1.	S ewe	D
2.	U s	E
3.	B one	S
4.	M odes	T
5.	A nswe	R
6.	R ome	O
7.	I nternall	Y
8.	N.	E.
9.	E age	R

NOTES (52).—Light 1. Ewe. 2. Use and wont. 3. One. 4. Odes. 6. O me! 7. One word, and two. 9. Age.

ANSWER TO No. 53.

1.	M ontcalm	M
2.	A delphi	I
3.	X woma	N
4.	I srafel	I
5.	M edmenha	M
6.	U ggawa	U
7.	M elpo	M

NOTES (53).—Light 1. Joseph Montcalm; Quebec, the Heights of Abraham. 2. Terence's play, first produced in 160 B.C.; acted at Rome; in modern days, one of the four Westminster plays. 3. Manxwoman, bereft of either her "man" or her island-home, Man. 4. Poe, *Israfel*. 5. The motto of the Medmenham Brotherhood was, *Fay ce que voudras*. 6. Longfellow, *Hiawatha*, Puggawaugun. 7. With six of the nine letters of Melpomene, one of the nine muses, the acrostic is concluded.

Correspondents who write to the Acrostic Editor and desire answers to their queries should enclose a stamped addressed envelope with their letters, and the A.E. will endeavour to reply. Lack of space makes it impossible to answer in print.

The HAND in the DARK

By

L. J. BEESTON

Illustrated by Dudley Tennant

"AN awkward thing has happened; a most confoundedly awkward thing has occurred."

The statement was Carling's. He came up out of the sun and dropped on to the bench by Fisher's side, in the cool of the larch that rested green arms on the lawn.

Fisher opened sleepy eyes. "Indeed?" he murmured, politely.

"Yes, sir, indeed. I have been looking for you. I want to tell you about it. But you were sleeping?"

"Dozing, merely. It is going to be a close, hot day. I hope you do not bring bad news?"

"Infernally bad," grunted Carling. He paused to fill a big pipe made of the root of some strange tree. He had spent forty years where strange trees are, in the tropical belt. Fisher—a small pale man—winced at the preliminary pungent wave that sagged heavily under his nose, menacing swift disagreement with his recently-swallowed breakfast.

"You were all admiring the diamond which I wore in a ring," started Carling, with incisive brusqueness. "That pale green fellow out of Borneo, of eight grains, and which I could sell for a thousand pounds any day of the week, not excluding Sundays. You remember it?"

"Certainly I do!"

"Well, it has gone."

"Gone?"

"It was taken from my bedroom last night."

Fisher turned sharply, putting back his left arm and taking hold of the back of the seat as he faced Carling's right profile. The action was followed by a sudden exclamation, and he withdrew his hand to look at the fleshy part of a finger on which a spot of blood had appeared.

"You've run a splinter there; suck it out," said the other, in momentary sympathy.

"My dear man, this is most serious," exclaimed Fisher, deep concern hushing his voice.

"I agree perfectly; it is. The thing is as simple as it is unpleasant. Before I turned in last night I put the ring in a little porcelain tray on my dressing-table. In the morning it had vanished. Someone had stepped into my room, very kindly, and appropriated the pale green. It was no difficult matter. I always sleep with my door and windows wide open. That is only natural to a man whose home has been the wild for decades. I allow it was perhaps asking for trouble. I admit carelessness throughout. I should have dropped the ring into a drawer. The same thoughtless habit had made me leave my best razor open and undried—I always shave last thing at nights. Be all that as it may, somebody has got away with my diamond. First, I thought of a servant. Poor devils, they generally come in for the opening suspicion. The only one who visits my room in the morning is the girl Parry, who fetches the tea. But I was awake when she came; and in any case she couldn't have done it. She hasn't the sort of face."

"No," agreed Fisher, readily. "She has not."

Copyright, 1918, by L. J. Beeston.

"Who, then? I haven't told our host. I shrink from telling Colonel Houseman. Even to state the facts is to accuse one of his guests. A nasty shock for a man who has entertained us in the way he has. All the same I'd be a fool not to take action. Then I thought of you, Fisher. Unlike myself, you have spent all your life in society with the last dazzle of polish on it. You are a man of the world. Seemed to me you might know how to act in such a rotten embarrassment."

Fisher twiddled nervous fingers. His imaginative, tense, sensitive temperament was already flustered.

"I am bound to say that this is my first experience of the kind," he protested. "Really, I wish anything had happened but this. But your course is clear. You must inform Colonel Houseman without delay. It is a duty which you owe to us all. I think that will be apparent to you."

"I suppose so," mused Carling, in the midst of a suffocating cloud. "Hang it, it will be like hitting him. There are five of us: you and me, Perrill, Arkwright, and Sinjohn. What steps will Houseman take, think you?"

"If I know him rightly he will insist on your recovering your property. Yes, he will. You see, there is an issue at stake even more grave than your heavy loss. I allude to the honour of four men. The colonel will carry the thing through in the most unflinching manner."

Carling got up, making a grimace. "Perhaps I'd better keep my tongue between my teeth," he growled.

"It is too late."

"What do you mean—too late?"

"You have told me, and now we must all be told."

Carling stared, then shrugged his shoulders. "I follow you," he grunted. "Of course."

Left alone Fisher pressed a hand to his forehead, which ached. It was a distressing affair, and he already felt it acutely. Either Perrill, Arkwright, or Sinjohn had stolen the jewel. It was only the day before yesterday that Carling had taken it off his finger and passed it round for inspection. Everyone had admired the brilliant, just kissed with a faint aquamarine tint. And was it possible that even then one of them had regarded it with the healthless eye of a thief? Fisher shuddered at the repellent suggestion, which had the hiss of a snake.

His head throbbed. There was a weariness in his bones with a slight touch of feverishness. He decided to go indoors and to rest in his cool room for an hour. He was not unaccustomed to this migraine, and he always kept by him a little medicated snuff which had been prescribed for the purpose.

On opening a drawer in his dressing-table he perceived that the little box containing the snuff was not there. Strange! True, he had not used it since arriving on this visit to the country; but he had a most distinct recollection of removing it from a pocket in his large leather dressing-case and placing it in the dressing-table drawer. A most distinct recollection.

For a minute or so he stood frowning and puzzled. It seemed waste of time to look in the dressing-case, but he unfastened the nickel clasps and——

Suddenly he saw the box. It was inside the case. A simple little round box of cedar-wood with a screw top. Still frowning, he took it out, and then he saw, smeared across the top of it, a dull, reddish-brown stain which looked like dried blood.

Between Fisher's eyes the furrowed perplexity deepened. He stared at the box in a most intent fashion. Suddenly a wave of crimson mounted streaming and burning over his face. His first act was to impart a little shaking motion to the box. Then he put it back inside the dressing-case and sank into a chair.

He had been stabbed by an idea, and it had hurt him pretty severely. He became just as white as he had been red, and the sweat of it broke upon his forehead. Involuntarily he glanced at the trifling injury to his finger.

It had not been caused by running a splinter into it on the back of the bench in the garden. Fisher knew that perfectly well. He had found a slight cut there when he was dressing, and had wondered at it for a fraction of a second.

And he had wondered also at his great weariness, his overpowering sleepiness, for he had spent a wakeful night.

A horrible explanation of both mysteries had abruptly flashed upon him, well-nigh making him faint. There were occasions in his life when he had walked in his sleep, when he had acted with his senses still drugged by slumber. On each of these occasions he had been in a strange house. And now there rushed upon him the question, "Is it possible that I entered Carling's room last night, took the diamond from his table, concealed it in my snuff-box, and put it away in my dressing-case? Good God! is it possible that I did this insane thing?"

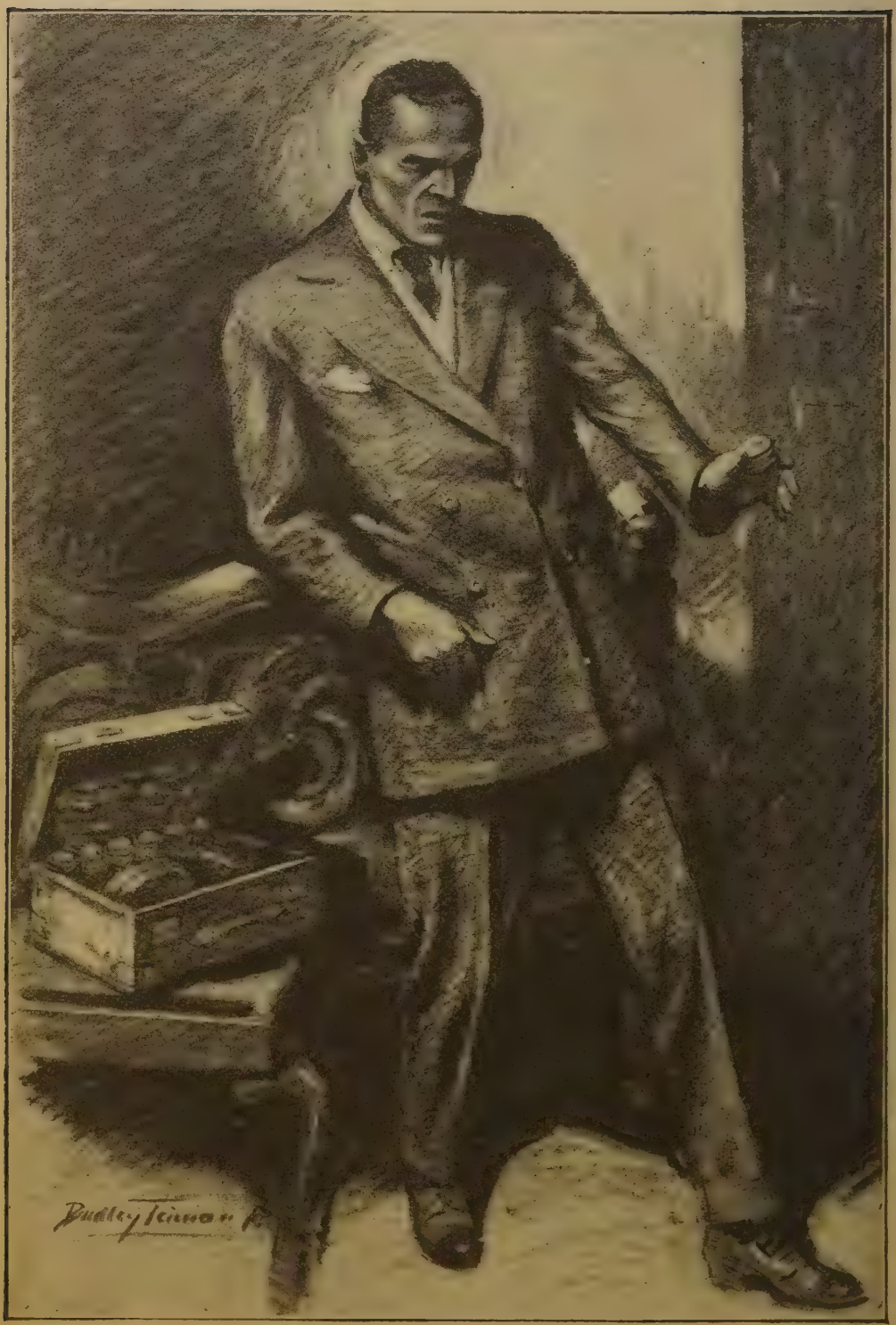
The cut in his finger might well have been caused by bringing it into contact with the open razor which Carling had left on his table. In groping for the ring he—Fisher—had touched the edge of the blade. His finger had bled and so had stained the box, which he had made use of as a place of concealment. Yes, it *must* be so. In what other way could he explain the facts? There was the snuff-box put away; there was the blood upon it.

Damning!

But in the first shock of suspicion he had imparted a shake to the box. Would he not have heard the ring rattle if it had been inside? Not necessarily. It might have sunk into the mixture; might be embedded there.

But he had only to open the snuff-box in order to ease, in one way, the crisis of the situation. He told himself this, but it was just what he felt himself unable to do—at any rate, for the moment. At the present moment it was not *certain* that he had committed this horrible—if unwitting—crime. He might be entirely innocent of it. That was something.

At the best of times he was just a bundle of nerves, and now they were lacerated nerves.



"STILL FROWNING, HE TOOK IT OUT, AND THEN HE SAW, SMEARED ACROSS THE TOP OF IT, A DULL, REDDISH-BROWN STAIN WHICH LOOKED LIKE DRIED BLOOD."

A gentleman to his finger-tips, Fisher had no enemies except a morbid sensitiveness, an abnormal nervous timidity. His racked thoughts, his enfevered fancy, rapidly scanned the situation. Carling had come to him with his story of having been robbed of a very valuable jewel. If he—Fisher—was to go to him immediately afterwards, saying, "Here is your diamond. I took it during sleep, and now have luckily discovered that I did so," what would Carling think? What would the others think—since by this time Colonel Houseman had been told of the story? Would they unhesitatingly acquit him of meditated crime? The colonel would. Fisher realized that. But the rest? Before his face they might be silent; they might even proffer sympathy. But later on, at their clubs, in their homes? And Carling himself—that large, strong, fleshly man, who did not know what nerves were, and rather despised an affection of them in his fellows—what construction would he take of the affair?

Fisher kept wiping his forehead, and the perspiration kept instantly gathering again. Imagination groped in a far future. He would meet friends in the street, but they would not meet *him*. He knew the subtlety of that distinction. In his club he saw the evening papers go up before faces as he entered. He heard a compelled "Ah, Fisher, I didn't see you!" and felt the chill of a listless palm in his. Horrible! He had seen all that sort of thing done on others. He had done it himself once or twice. He could imagine nothing worse happening to a man.

With an effort he pushed this nightmare off his chest. He tried to urge that he was, perhaps, sweating under a ghastly illusion. There was a chance that this fierce worry was without a cause, and that the missing jewel was not where he suspected it to be. He hugged this thought for all it was worth. It was a tenuous hope, but he dared not risk shattering it by looking. If he saw the ring there he would faint. At present, at any rate, he could not screw up his courage for the ordeal; he could not risk blowing out the glimmer of hope which faintly warmed him.

Colonel Houseman grappled with the affair with the straight common sense and directness of an old soldier.

It was after dinner when he threw his bomb and blew his guests' equanimity to remnants.

"No man here is going to be annoyed with me or Carling," said he, going round coolly with the cigars. "No man is going to be foolishly offended. It is an ugly affair, but it can only hurt a single person. I must deal with it; we must deal with it, and then we'll forget it everlastingly. Carling is absolutely sure that he placed his diamond on his dressing-table when he went to bed last night. Since he told me of it I have had the room searched in a manner that would not have left a hair undiscovered. Parry was the only servant who entered, or who was near his room. I have seen her. She is a sensible, a right-headed woman, and she has been in my service for ten years. Unhesitatingly she made an exhaustive examination of all her belongings in my presence. What she so readily and cheerfully did any gentleman will do in the circs. That is admitted?"

"Certainly it is," Perrill was the first to answer. "Our sympathies are with you, Houseman. I am entirely at your disposal in the matter."

"The right thing, to which I subscribe," said Arkwright.

The colonel's eye travelled to Sinjohn.

"Of course, of course," said the latter, unaffectedly.

Fisher felt the eye upon him in his turn.

"I am in full agreement with the suggestion," said he, feeling the soles of his feet go chill as ice.

"Oh, hang it all!" burst in Carling, who was by far the most uncomfortable of all. "I beg that the matter may be allowed to slide. I was a fool to intrude my loss——"

"You would have been a worse not to have spoken of it," smiled Colonel Houseman, genially. "Don't take it to heart, old man. None of us is going to. Nettles must be grasped, and we'll grasp this one. We ought to settle it between ourselves, and we will."

"But I don't like this searching business," stammered Carling, wriggling in his chair. "There's a neater method. If any living soul in this house so far forgot himself as to—er—er—to borrow my diamond for a few hours, then let him come to me privately, say so, and return it. That'll be the end of it. I think I know how to keep my mouth shut."

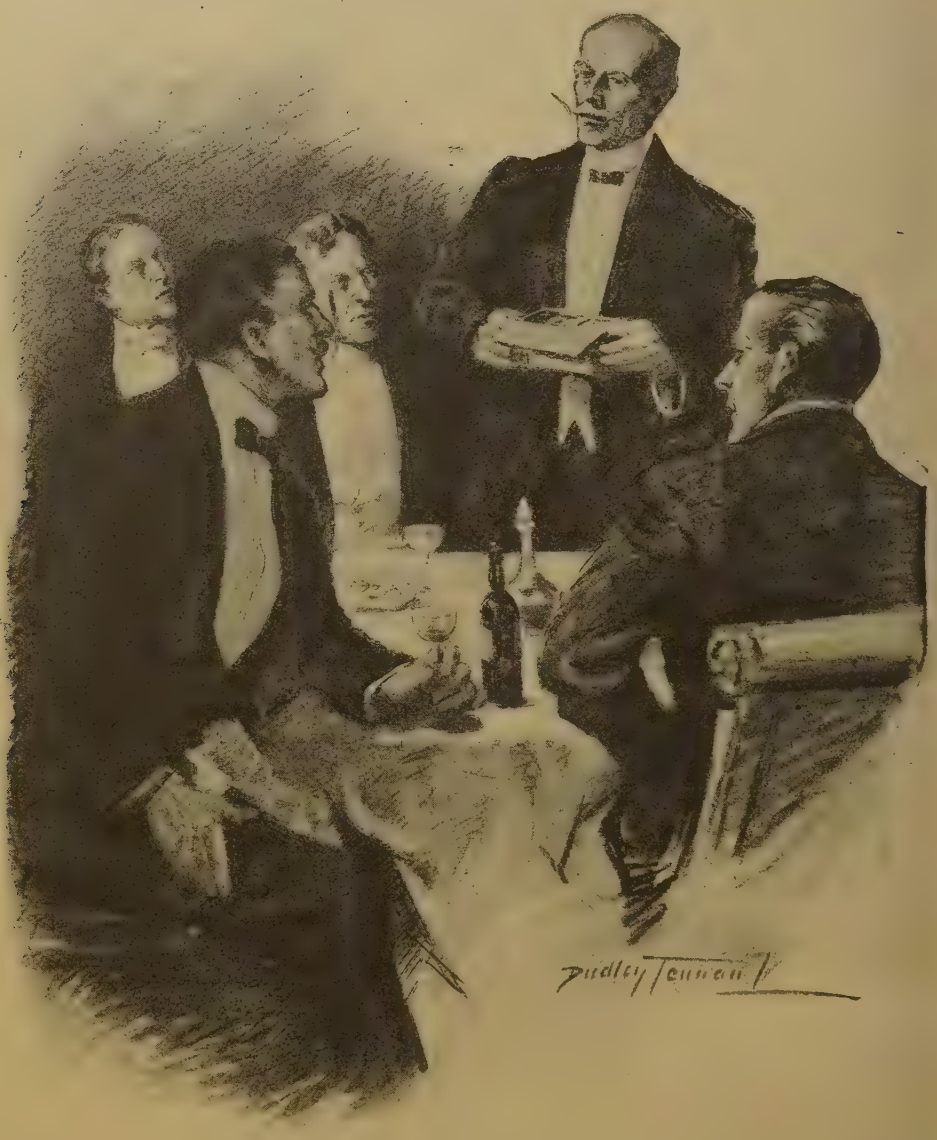
"Better than your bedroom door," grinned the colonel, determined not to exclude a healthy good-humour. "Fair and charitable, Carling; but in the circumstances rather rough on anyone else under my roof, do you not think? I should insist on your whispering a name to me, you know. That would close the affair, certainly."

Fisher writhed under a wrenching pang. He foresaw the sequel to this scheme. Houseman would, in turn, whisper the name to the others, who would have a right to know it. They also would speak of closed mouths, of shut teeth, of keeping the thing in a proper and polite dark. And then, later on, after a week or so, the cooling of friendships, the cessation of invitations, the lookings over his head, the side-glances of wonder and disdain.

"Anyhow," Carling insisted, vehemently, "I ask the favour that you will leave it like that until, say, the morning."

"Personally I am willing," answered Houseman, with a look round.

There was no dissent, and the acutely painful subject was turned aside. But it showed itself in the changed tones of the speakers, in a laugh which did not ring true, in the long, uncomfortable pauses. Colonel Houseman, who seemed most at his ease, was in the grip of mental pincers. What a horrible thing to happen in a man's house! He had known it to occur in other men's houses once or twice. On one occasion it had been hushed up; on another



"'I DON'T LIKE THIS SEARCHING BUSINESS,' STAMMERED CARLING. 'THERE'S A NEATER METHOD. IF ANY LIVING SOUL IN THIS HOUSE SO FAR FORGOT HIMSELF AS TO—ER—ER—TO BORROW MY DIAMOND FOR A FEW HOURS, THEN LET HIM COME TO ME PRIVATELY, SAY SO, AND RETURN IT.'"

the loser had made a most infernal noise, and the scandal had gone right through the clubs.

"That was a detective's doing," reflected the colonel, gloomily reminiscent. "A plain-clothes police-officer was employed. Now, I would sooner poison my guests than have them put under surveillance."

Fisher's wearied brain was lashed by a single thought. *Was the diamond ring in his snuff-box, or wasn't it?* That he had deferred action very fatally was now palpable. If it was too late after Carling's confidence in him alone, it was doubly too late since Colonel Houseman had spoken. He saw himself trying to explain before them all; struggling to impart to his tale the reality it deserved. How his cheeks would flame, to be sure! How he would falter and stutter and stammer, and look the typical liar from his perspiring forehead to his shuffling feet!

For an hour or two he watched the others knock billiard-balls about; and then he tried to write a letter; and then he said good-night and sought his own room.

He switched on the light and stared steadfastly at his dressing-case in a corner. Was the ring inside there, or wasn't it?

Suddenly there came to him an idea. Why not take his box of medicated snuff and bury it in some corner outside? Bury it without opening it! It was now by no means an absolute certainty that he had taken the jewel and hid it, and there was no reason why he ever should be certain. If he looked into the receptacle and found the diamond there, then he could not possibly inter it from sight. That would be monstrous, and highly dangerous to himself. He would never know a moment's future peace. But the case would be different if he got rid of the box while in semi-ignorance of what was inside it.

He pulled up his blind and softly raised the window. A roar of rain boomed up from the steaming ground and dripping laurels. That meant that he would get wet. His clothes might dry in the night. On the other hand, they might not. In the latter case his nocturnal exodus might be suspected. Ugly, very.

He peered down. He would not have to drop far, but a certain noise he was bound to create. A light filtered through the blinds of the billiard-room close down there, and he heard Perrill's voice call out, "That was a God-help-me sort of stroke, Arkwright."

No, he would not put such an idea into action. It had a soiled appearance, anyhow; and if he was found at it—good-bye to all worth living. He pulled down the window and sank into a chair, breathing hard, his cheeks burning.

"I'll try no hole-and-corner way out of it," muttered Fisher. "In the morning my belongings will be raked over. The chances are about forty-nine in fifty that Carling's accursed diamond is in my snuff-box. The affair having gone so far it will be better that others find it there, and not I. Yes, yes, that may help me a little. I shall then be able to express astonishment; to affirm, with perfect truth, that I did not know it was there."

This was undeniable, but it brought small comfort. He fixed his eyes upon the dressing-case, brooding and dejected. He heard sounds below of bolts being pushed into sockets. Everyone was retiring. They would all pass a good night except himself.

"And yet, is that certain?" he reflected. "There is just a chance that Perrill, or Arkwright, or Sinjohn took the jewel. Still, they are men of means, and it seems incredible that either should stoop to such degradation. Unfortunately, I am not so happily situated in that respect, and that will go against me if—if——"

So his imagination wandered off into this turning and that, groping after wild clues, after impossible elucidations. A rigid silence reigned in the house, broken at regular intervals by the drone of a big clock sounding the half-hours.

Suddenly Fisher opened his eyes. He had nodded in his big, cushion-padded chair without knowing it. His limbs were cramped, almost numbed, and he felt chilly. The artificial light still glowed in his room, but it was rendered pale and sickly by being mingled with the breaking dawn. Fisher stared about him rather foolishly, hardly realizing where he was. Then it all came back to him, and he relaxed with a whimpering sigh.

Heavily he heaved himself up from his chair and drew aside the curtains. The rain was over, and the sky was striated with grey dawn changing rapidly to gold. He looked at his watch. He had slept three hours in his chair. It had been about two o'clock when he dropped off, and it was now five. Catching a glimpse of himself in a mirror, he started to see how pale he was, how wretchedly unshaven he looked.

At that moment he heard a murmur of voices down the corridor. In a dull and almost involuntary fashion he opened his door to listen. Colonel Houseman was up and speaking.

"You're an early riser, Carling," he was saying. "Going to find our breakfast in the river? If you'll wait five minutes I'll get my rod and join you. I agree——"

"Right-o, colonel," interrupted Carling, loudly and cheerily. "And I've got some good news for you. What do you think? I have found my diamond."

There was a gasp of astonishment from Houseman. "*Found* it?" he echoed. "Where?"

"On the china tray on my dressing-table! It was replaced during the night. That is about the best thing——"

Fisher moved back. He closed his door softly. A mountain's weight rolled off his chest, and yet for all that he felt himself suffocating, choking in a relief which was almost an agony. What? He had been entirely innocent after all? He had suffered himself foolishly to endure those hours of torture when not the slightest necessity had existed?

He leaped towards his dressing-case to snatch from it the cause of all that poignant misery.

The snuff-box was not there.

For a moment he stood as if paralyzed by this fresh shock. Dazed, well-nigh stupefied, he plunged his hands into his trouser pockets in an attitude of baffled, of amazed contemplation. Suddenly his lips parted; his eyes commenced to protrude. Slowly he withdrew his right hand. He stared at it as if it contained something entirely new to the universe.

It was his round box of medicated snuff. He gasped, in a loud, hoarse whisper:—

"I—I put it back myself!"

He took a staggering step or two to his bed and dropped upon the side of it. He was almost fainting with relief. Staring at the box in his hand he considered. His lips formed certain words without giving them direct utterance. If he had spoken them aloud, this is what he would have said:—

"Confess? Own up? Explain? I think not! For just as I was not sure that I took the diamond, so I am not certain that I restored it!"

Good logic. And he smiled gleefully, beamingly, expansively—perhaps just a trifle artfully.

THE CHESS CHARM.

By W. H. WATTS.

TO the uninitiated, to the novice, and even to the moderate player the game of chess presents but one aspect, it has but one appeal, and that is only to be satisfied by the presence of a favourite opponent and a contest with him over the board.

This is undoubtedly the most important phase of the game and the one which has the largest number of adherents; but, unlike any other game, chess is divisible into several parts, each complete in itself, and, remarkable though it may seem, each section has its devotees, who may exhibit little interest in any other section. It is in this way that chess has attained its unrivalled popularity, as its variety of appeal brings under its sway so many differing types of mind. There has been considerable development in all phases of chess during the last decade or so; it is much more widely practised and its theory has been extended to a remarkable degree. The scope of the game has been much developed in consequence, and in some form it makes appeal to an ever-widening circle. Many previous writers have endeavoured to express the chess charm in words, but this is nowadays so intensely individual that what has already been said on the subject is out of date because of the development of what we may call subsidiary sections of the game.

This chess-loving circle includes to-day many people who would have had a much lesser interest in the game had they lived, say, seventy years ago, because the particular form of chess which now appeals to them most strongly was then practically unknown, or at any rate was in a very undeveloped state.

Among chess enthusiasts two main groups of devotees are recognized, viz., the player and the problemist, but this rough and ready classification is too general, and attempt is made in the following to define more closely the sections of the game, illustrating how its various phases appeal to their respective exponents. First and foremost comes the player. Even this class can be divided into two, or perhaps more, sections. There is the student or serious match-player who knows his openings and has countless variations of his favourite attacks and defences at his fingers' ends, who knows all there is to know of mid-game combinations and the quickest method of finishing whatever ending he may get, who delights in studiously playing over long games, and to whom the profound object of every move made is obvious. His chess would be hard work for most of us, but there is a large school to whom this form of the game makes the strongest possible appeal, and we cannot attempt to provide for their chess needs in an article of this kind.

Secondly comes the skittler, or friendly game player, who

1.—By the Rev. A. CYRIL PEARSON.

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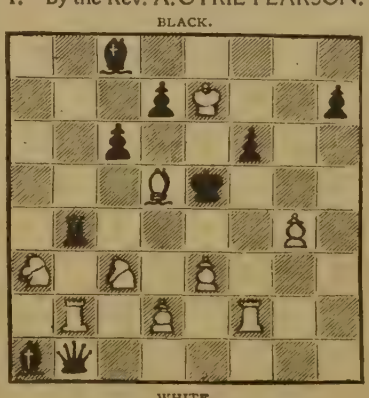

WHITE.

White to move and mate in four.

2.—By A. M. SPARKE.

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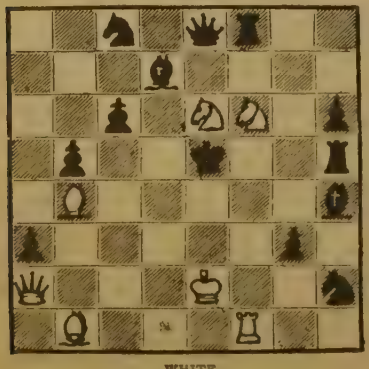

WHITE.

White to move and mate in two.

3.—By B. G. LAWS.

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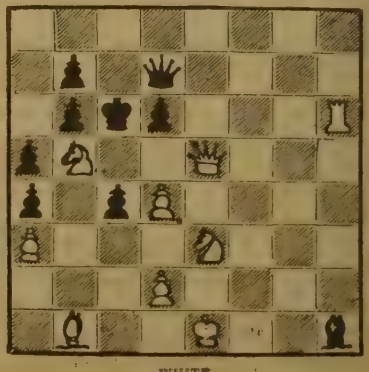


WHITE.

White to move and mate in three.

likes the quick results obtained in off-hand games of the lively sort, and certainly these men have produced some of the most entertaining games. They get much out of their chess, and their name is legion. The following game is a good example of off-hand play :—

1. P	– K4	P – K4	13. Kt	– Kt5ch	K – K2
2. P	– KB4	P x P	14. Castles		B x Kt
3. Kt	– KB3	Kt – KB3	15. R x B		B – Kt2
4. P	– K5	Kt – Q4	16. P	– Q5	P – Kt5
5. P	– Q4	Kt – K6	17. P	– Q6ch	K – K1
6. B	x Kt	P x B	18. R	– QB8ch	B x R
7. B	– B4	P – QB4	19. Q	– B3	Q x RP
8. P	– B3	P x P	20. P	– K6	Kt – B3
9. P	x P	Q – R4ch	21. Q	– B7ch	K – Q1
10. Kt	– B3	B – Kt5	22. Q	– B8ch	R x Q
11. R	– QB1	P – QKt4	23. R x R mate		
12. B	x Pch	K x B			

Analysis is anathema to these players. Book knowledge they are proud to be without, whether of openings or endings, and they don't want to see how they "could have won" or where their opponent missed a chance—a game won or lost is finished, and they are anxious to begin the next.

Second in importance comes the problemist, and here again is subdivision into two main classes, the composer and the solver. There is many a regular problem-solver who never plays a game. To him the set task is the thing, but his taskmaster, the composer, does not look upon his work in that light. For him it is the "poetry" of chess that charms. It is the construction of a clever mate, originating a new idea in problem-making or setting or expressing an old one in a new and better style, or introducing some subtle variation, that brings him under the chess thrall. This section has a technical language all its own, and its devotees will talk of "economy in setting" and "tasks and echoes" and "mirror mates" and "waiters," etc., etc., to the utter bewilderment of the mere player.

When problems first became popular, four-movers or even longer mates were almost exclusively favoured. Nowadays two and three movers are almost as exclusively the fashion. An example of the four-mover is given in Diagram 1, a modern two-mover in Diagram 2, and a modern three-mover in Diagram 3.

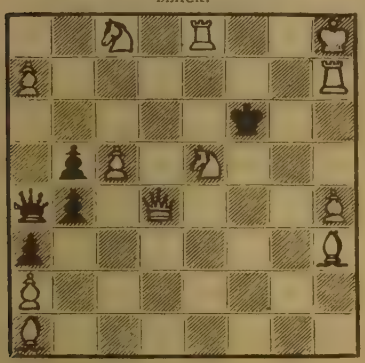
Fashion in problem construction has changed in many ways besides the length of the mate, and a very definite code is established which determines the construction of the problem and its solution. The problem art has been vastly extended in scope, and although sui-mates and conditional positions found their way occasionally into the chess publications of long ago they have undergone much development in recent years. Retractors are a comparatively modern invention. One specimen of each is given to illustrate this type of problem. (4, 5, and 6.)

Chess puzzles pure and simple are in reality distinct from either of these forms of problems. There is a great variety of these enigmas, as they are sometimes called, and there are many one-time players who have a fund of such positions memorized, and nothing pleases them more than to get a coterie of their acquaintances round the board struggling with one of these positions. Sam Loyd, one of the best-known problem composers, gained pre-eminence in this form of composition, and we give a couple of specimens of his skill. (7 and 8.) Many other excellent puzzles have been published in THE STRAND MAGAZINE during recent years.

There is yet another class of problem which attracts a distinct set of composers and solvers. This is known as the

4.—By C. PLANCK.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White forces self-mate in three.

6.—By T. B. ROWLAND.

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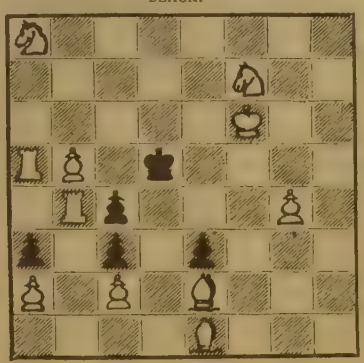

WHITE.

White to play and mate in six by moving his king only.

5.—By PHILIP H. WILLIAMS.

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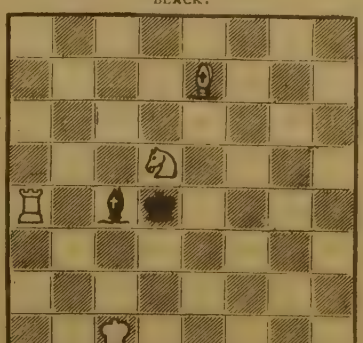
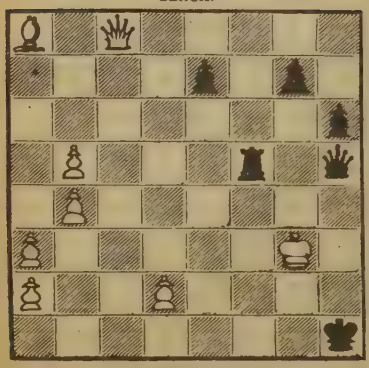


WHITE.

1. White retracts his last move.
2. Black retracts his last move.
3. Black plays, *giving check*, enabling
4. White to mate.

7.—By S. LOYD.

BLACK.



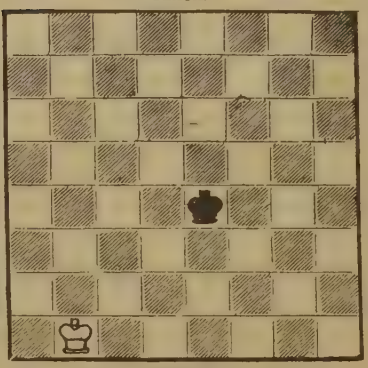
WHITE.

Black resigns.

What was White's last move?

8.—By S. LOYD.

BLACK.



WHITE.

Place two White rooks and one White knight on the board so as to mate the Black king where it stands, without the use of any other pieces.

"end game." It will probably call down on my defenceless head a considerable amount of abuse when I say this is undoubtedly the most artistic form of chess composition. A position is given seemingly lost, or drawn at best, for one side, but some slight provision in the disposition of the pieces allows him to win or draw in the first case or win in the second. The task is to find that provision, and, when found, to apply it. Troitzky, a Russian, and Rinck, a Spaniard, are two of the best-known end-game composers, and we give a specimen from each, besides a third position which is very simple but quite charming. Unfortunately, we do not know to whom this should be credited. (9, 10, and 11.)

Thus it is readily evident that there must be many people of varied types of mind finding interest, not to say solace, in these times in chess—and there is some phase of the game to appeal to everyone who takes the trouble to master its first forbidding appearance and reputation to the uninitiated.

Having examined briefly the various sections of the game we should see wherein lies the charm, although it is the intention of this article to indicate rather than actually define "the chess charm." Primarily it is the combative spirit in human nature to which the game owes its increasing popularity. The mimic combat, the setting of wit against wit, is the pervading feature of all its forms; two opponents, one against the other (in the case of problems, end games, and puzzles it is the composer versus the solver).

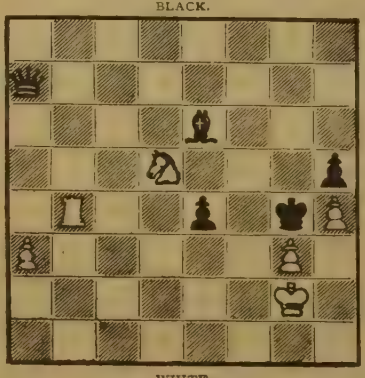
Thus the careful, thorough student and the volatile, light-hearted skittler are catered for. The constructive genius sets the task for the mathematical bent to solve. The trickster finds scope to catch the unwary. The artist with a beautiful, yet clever, end-game study delights the logical, clear-reasoning mind which detects the saving clause he has ingeniously introduced, whilst the strategist has full scope to test his theories in Kriegspiel or war chess.

The definite result achieved by the combat of two minds must make some appeal to everyone, and in this respect chess claims the attention of every thinking person. In ordinary argument neither side wins: it is a beating of the air, but the logic of the chessboard there is no gainsaying. Each side duly sets forth its views upon the problem of distribution of force to achieve an agreed object. One side is wrong and *has to admit it*; perhaps, therefore, it is not too banal to suggest that the mere admission of error by an opponent is one of the charms of the game, hitherto unexpressed.

The positions selected to illustrate this article are excellent specimens which will repay careful study, and a detailed examination of them will bring to light the features which make these individual aspects of the game so attractive to their respective adherents.

9.—By A. TROITZKY.

BLACK.

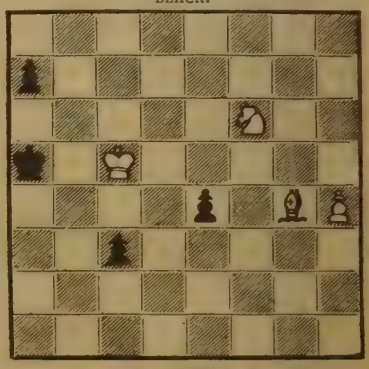


WHITE.

White to win.

10.—By HENRI RINCK.

BLACK.

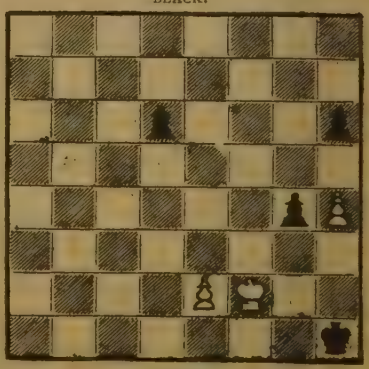


WHITE.

White to win.

11.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play. What result?

Solutions and acknowledgments will appear in next month's number.

THE PROBLEM CLUB

By BARRY PAIN.

No. XII.—THE PIG-KEEPER'S PROBLEM.

Illustrated by A. Garrett.

"WELL, gentlemen," said the chairman, Lord Herngill, "you have been required to purchase a copy of the current issue of *The Pig-Keeper's Friend*. It is generally published on the seventh of every month, but if the talented editor happens to be thinking about something else at the time—as occasionally happens—it may come out a few days later. It is published according to the law, but it cannot be said to court circulation. It is exposed for sale in certain places, but I doubt if any copy has been purchased by the general public for the last year—at any rate, not until the members of this club went on the hunt for it. How did you get on, Major Byles?"

"Wish I'd never gone in for it," snapped the Major. "I told my regular newsagent to get me a copy. He said he hadn't heard of it, but would make inquiries. At the end of a week he came to me with a story that, as far as he had been able to learn, the paper had discontinued publication a year before. I knew that was a lie, of course, and told him so, and said I'd finished with him. There's only one other newsagent near me, and I had to go to him. His beastly boy leaves the wrong papers at the house every morning, and seems to think I'm a Socialist like himself. The end of it will be that I shall have to eat my own words and go back to the other man. Destroys all discipline, that kind of thing."

Dr. Alden, Pusely-Smythe, and several others had hunted trade lists and directories in vain. Mr. Matthews had lavished money on advertisements, offering a sovereign for a copy of the current issue of *The Pig-Keeper's Friend*, and had received no reply.

Sir Charles Bunford had written to an old friend who held a high position at the British Museum, asking him to get hold of some recent number of *The Pig-Keeper's Friend*, and let him have the address at which it was published. After some delay the friend replied that he had seen a copy of the periodical, and that it appeared to be the work of a lunatic, and that the address given in it was "The Impersonation Society, Boswell Court, Fleet Street."

"It certainly looked to me," said Sir Charles, "as if I had got hold of the right end of the stick. I found the office, which appeared to occupy the whole of the top floor of the building. The name of the society was painted on the outer door, and underneath was the legend 'Hours Ten to Four.' It was then eleven in the morning. I knocked and rang, and could get no answer at all, and I could hear no sound of any activity within. I came back at three in the afternoon with the same result. I then sent a letter, saying that I required a copy of the current number of the paper, and wished to know what amount I should forward for the purpose; and to make it quite certain I enclosed a stamped and addressed envelope. Well, I got a reply, with an illegible signature. It said that no retail business was done at the office, but that I could apply for the copy through the usual channels. I still thought that I was on the right line, and gave the address to my newsagent and set him to work. The answer he got was that the current issue was out of print, all copies having been allocated. So there I stuck."

"You came rather near to it, though," said the chairman. "Suppose we shorten matters. Does any member claim to have won this competition? Our friend Jimmy has been looking rather pleased with himself all the evening."

"Have I?" said Jimmy. "Well, I don't mind admitting that I've got jolly good reason to be pleased with myself just now, quite apart from the competition. I've won that, too, as it happens. But I don't take much credit for it. Of course, you could say that it was due to the improved habits and all that, and I suppose that was so more or less, but the fact remains that I wasn't even thinking about the thing at the time, and if I hadn't forgotten my cigarette-case it would never have happened. So if you don't call it luck, what are you to call it?"

"Mr. Feldane," said the chairman, with great gravity, "you are beginning your story at the wrong end—that is, with the criticism of it. I must ask you to tell us simply what happened from the very commencement, and as coherently as possible."

"Certainly," said Jimmy, indulgently; "any old way that you happen to fancy. Well, to start with, though as a matter of fact it had been going on for more than a week before, they asked me to dine with them at the house on Wimbledon Common. So naturally I jumped at it. I won't say I had always been addicted to the scenery of Wimbledon, but there were certain private reasons."

"Private reasons for dining at Wimbledon?" said Hesseltine, reflectively. "I think I know her name, don't I?"

"Wish you wouldn't interrupt just at the moment when I'm being coherent. I was going

to dine at Wimbledon, and it takes some doing to get there. My own little car was in hospital, and the natural way seemed to be to take a taxi, and let it tick up the twopences until I wanted to go back. Then I reflected that I had decided to give up all silly extravagance, and on inquiry I found that there was a place called Waterloo Station from which I could book to Wimbledon. So I did so. I didn't smoke on my way out, which must have been a kind of absent-mindedness. It was on my way back that I found that I had forgotten my cigarette-case. Now nothing makes you feel you must smoke so much as the knowledge that you can't. I hopped out at Vauxhall and found a taxi right away—I'd got all the luck in the world that night. I told the driver where to go and to stop at a tobacconist's and do it soon. The shop he stopped at, in a back street off a side street, didn't look up to much, but I was desperate and ready to smoke anything that was called a Turkish cigarette. Behind the counter I found a fat, middle-aged man reading a book. He gave me something that would do, took my money, and called me 'sir.' But he was no more a tobacconist than I am.

"ON THE COUNTER WAS A SMALL PILE OF COPIES OF THE CURRENT NUMBER OF 'THE PIG-KEEPER'S FRIEND.'"

"Tobacconists may do a lot of funny things, but they don't read the Agamemnon of Æschylus in the original Greek, which is what this blighter was doing. Nor do they have manicured nails and an Oxford intonation—his attempt at a Cockney accent was one of the most pathetic failures I've ever met. However, that's not the point. The point is that on the counter was a small pile of copies of the current number of *The Pig-Keeper's Friend*. The number consisted of sixteen pages, and they were very small pages, and the price was one pound, but I did not hesitate. I bought my copy, and I have it in my pocket now. I'll hand it up to our chairman. I've had a glance at it myself, and I'm inclined to agree with that Museum johnnie. It's got nothing to do with pigs. It's mostly poetry, and the rest is foolishness. It beats me altogether."

The chairman examined the copy of the paper which had been handed to him. "There is no doubt about it," he said. "This is a copy of the current issue, and Mr. Feldane assures us that he bought it. No other claim is put forward. The club's cheque for one hundred and ten pounds will therefore be drawn to the order of Mr. Feldane. Has any member anything to add?"

"I have," said Mr. Matthews. "The whole thing wants clearing up, and I hope our chairman will clear it. Is our problem-setter really a lunatic? What is he doing with this weird paper of his? What's the Impersonation Society? Who was the over-educated tobacconist? We'd like the whole story."

And to this there was general assent.

"I've no objection," said Lord Herngill. "Willy Bunting has empowered me to tell you anything I like about him, including the truth. The fact is that in this problem the members of this club have come up against another organization, the Impersonation Society, which is one of Bunting's curious inventions.

"I first knew him as an undergraduate. I thought a good deal of his ability both as a poet and as an amateur actor. He was also no end of a lark. He was not a lunatic, but he had endless eccentricities. He had no ambitions, a contempt for public opinion, and a determination to do just as he liked. He was sent down for impersonating one of the proctors. He was beautifully made up, and looked exactly like that proctor, but he had the misfortune to meet the original in Trumpington Street.

"This disaster did not greatly trouble him. He had more money than was good for him, and was not intending to take up any profession. He came to London, and shortly afterwards he started the Impersonation Society. His

theory was that the ordinary holiday is a mistake, and that what a tired man or woman wants is not only a change of place but a change of personality. In order to get a complete rest you must, for the time being, be somebody else. You must dress and live like the character you have assumed, and you must even try to think like him. I am by no means sure that there is not something to be said for the idea. There must be plenty of people who think so, for the membership of the society has increased every year and includes some of the very last people that you would expect to find in such an organization.

"For instance, the man that Jimmy found in the tobacconist's shop in the Vauxhall neighbourhood is in reality the headmaster and proprietor of a large and successful private school. All through term-time he is treated with intense respect. Little boys call him 'sir,' and tremble before him. His assistant masters treat him with a deference which they are probably very far from feeling. He lives in an atmosphere of sickening and insincere flattery, and smoking is strictly prohibited. So in his holiday he becomes a tobacconist's assistant, smokes nearly all day, goes about in his shirt-sleeves when so inclined, treats customers with respect, is respected by nobody himself, professes no more virtues than he really has, and thoroughly enjoys it. He says that it keeps him sane. The shop itself is, of course, the property of the society, and a resident manager trains those members who wish to take a holiday there.

"I should perhaps explain why Sir Charles Bunford was unable to obtain entrance to the rooms of the society. He misinterpreted the legend on the door. The hours are ten to four, but they are from ten at night to four in the morning. I may add that it was once raided by the police, to the intense disappointment of the police and to the great joy of the members, particularly Willy Bunting.

"But I must tell you something of *The Pig-Keeper's Friend*. Willy's nearest relative is an irascible uncle, who told him that he was wasting his life. Willy said that, on the contrary, he was enjoying it. The uncle maintained that Willy did nothing, and Willy replied that he wrote poetry. Then the indignant uncle did a foolish thing. He said that he was prepared to bet a hundred pounds that Willy never had a poem accepted by the editor of any existing periodical published in London. Willy jumped at that bet. That moribund monthly, *The Pig-Keeper's Friend*, was at that time in the market. It had lost its circulation and had never had advertisements. The wretched enthusiast who had brought it into being was heartily sick of it. Willy offered a fiver for it, which was more than it was worth, and instantly became the proprietor. He then appointed himself editor, and in his editorial capacity accepted one of his own poems and printed it in the next issue. A prefatory note said that the editor had no doubt that the weary pig-keeper would be glad to beguile his hours of leisure with the following poem by his esteemed contributor, William Bunting. Willy sent a copy of it to his uncle, received his hundred, and was cut out of the uncle's last will and testament.

"Having acquired the magazine, Willy proceeded to make it the organ of the Impersonation Society. He still printed his own poems in it, and occasionally mine, but it was principally devoted to the cryptic record of the many strange activities of the Impersonation Society. The original title was retained, and occasional references to pigs and pig-keeping will be found in it. For instance, in the current issue there are a number of spoof inquiries from agonized pig-keepers seeking the expert advice of the editor in their difficulties. One of them asks how, in the event of his pigs swarming, he is to know which of them is the queen. The editor's replies are humorous and in some cases, I regret to say, Rabelaisian.

"The present issue of the paper was on sale at the tobacconist's. It has also been offered in the public streets by a supposed newsvender every day for the last month. The only copy purchased was bought by Jimmy, who found it by accident. As the paper is sold only by members, Mr. Matthews will understand why his advertisements failed to get any result. And now that I've answered your questions I'd like to put one to our prize-winner."

"Go ahead," said Jimmy.

"How many times have you dined at Wimbledon in the last week?"

"Four times, as it happens. You see, the views there over the Common are really——"

"You needn't continue. You've said enough. I am sure that I may offer you the hearty congratulations of the club on your engagement."

"Well, I'm blest," said Jimmy. "I am engaged, I'm pleased and proud to say, but how on earth did you know?"

"In many ways, and I'll tell you one. Only one thing on earth could have made you forget your cigarette-case."

And naturally the next thing to do was to drink to the health of Jimmy and his future bride. And it was done with great enthusiasm.

And here the chronicles of the Problem Club must come to an end. The story of how Willy Bunting became a member of the club and subsequently retired from it, and how the solution of one problem brought the Rev. Septimus Cunliffe into the police-court, and how the solution of another made Mr. Matthews miss his dinner, and how a negro failed to get into the club, and how a girl of seventeen was actually elected—these things with many others must remain hidden in the club archives.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

432.—MAKING A WORD SQUARE.

THIS is a new kind of puzzle that at first sight looks difficult, but I will show that it is really quite easy. You have to form a word square by exchanging every letter once with another that is connected with it by a chess knight's move. Thus, taking the top row, you might exchange T with E, O with R, A with M, and so on. But a little thought will greatly simplify the task. Thus, as there is only one O, one L, and one N, these must clearly be transferred to the diagonal from the top left-hand corner to the bottom right-hand corner. Then, as the letters in the first row must be the same as in the first file, in the second row as in the second file, and so on, you are generally limited in your choice of making a pair. The puzzle can therefore be solved in a very few minutes.

T	O	A	Y	S	M
S	H	L	T	T	H
R	E	A	M	S	E
R	S	E	E	M	R
R	S	R	Y	S	T
E	I	N	E	M	I

433.—THE POSTAGE-STAMPS PUZZLE.

A YOUTH who collects postage-stamps was asked how many he had in his album, and he replied: "The number, if divided by 2, will give a remainder 1; divided by 3, a remainder 2; divided by 4, a remainder 3; divided by 5, a remainder 4; divided by 6, a remainder 5; divided by 7, a remainder 6; divided by 8, a remainder 7; divided by 9, a remainder 8; and divided by 10, a remainder 9. But there are fewer than 3,000." Can you tell how many stamps there were in the album?

434.—GIVING THEM NAMES.

THIS little puzzle is based on a well-known one by Lewis Carroll. A number of passengers from a torpedoed ship landed from their boat on a small island, where they had to remain for some months for relief. They were a mixed lot and necessarily thrown much together. One wag amused himself by giving the others new Christian names, which he said were appropriate nicknames, but until he explained his method the appropriateness was not very apparent. Thus, a man who spent his time in rambling about the island he called Andrew, a fellow who had robbed a fellow-passenger he called Dennis, a man who before the war was living at Cologne he named Henri, a friend of his who had written words for a song he called Cyril, a botanist who was particularly interested in the cone-bearing trees on the island he named Charles, and a crank who had a mad theory that a building used for storing grain should be painted a bright vermilion he insisted on calling Bernard. Now there was one man in their midst who was known to have once wounded his own mother by firing at her with a gun. What name did he give this man? If you succeed, as you ought to do in a few minutes, in discovering the principle on which he set to work, the answer should give you little trouble.

435.—THE MILK-AND-WATER MAN.

AN honest purveyor of milk and water set out on his rounds with thirty-two gallons of pure milk. He had to deliver exactly the same quantity in each of four streets. After satisfying the requirements of the first street with pure milk, he filled up the deficiency with water and delivered the mixture to the second street. He then filled up again and delivered to the third street, afterwards once more supplying the deficiency with water and selling the required quantity to the fourth street. Then he had on hand forty quarts and one pint of pure milk—not to mention the water mixed with it. Can you discover what quantity of pure milk he delivered in each of the four streets?

436.—MISSING WORDS.

WHEN the . . . . all seek the shore,
The . . . . have trouble then in store.
O may no evil . . . . prevail
To foil their . . . . whene'er they sail!

The missing words all contain the same letters differently arranged.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

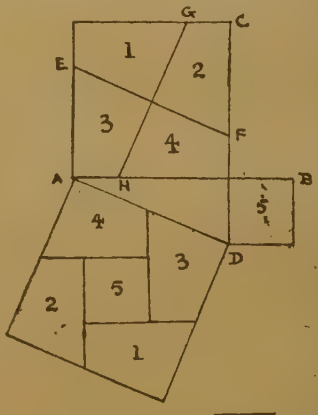
427.—THE SMUGGLERS' WINE.

THERE must have been three smugglers in order that there should be an equitable division. Two of the men would each receive 2 quarts and 3 pints of wine and 2 quarts and 1 pint in empty bottles. The third man would receive 3 quarts and 1 pint of wine and 1 quart and 3 pints in empty bottles. Each would then get the same quantity of wine and the same number of bottles of both kinds.

428.—SIMPLE DIVISION.

DIVIDE 4971636104 by 124972 and the quotient is 39782. The reader can now work out the little sum for himself and he will find that all the conditions are fulfilled. If we were allowed additional sevens in the dividend, an answer would be 7471076104 divided by 124972 equals 59782.

429. TWO SQUARES IN ONE.



PLACE the two squares together, so that A B and C D are straight lines. Then find the centre of the larger square and draw through it the line E F parallel to A D. If you now make G H (also through the centre) perpendicular to E F, you can cut out the four pieces and form the lower square as shown.

430.—AN OLD ENIGMA.

I HAVE no doubt that the correct answer is this. The "letter" is the letter O, which also stands for "nothing." Therefore the headless man had nothing to write, the man who lost his sight read nothing, the dumb repeated nothing word for word, and the deaf listened and heard nothing.

431.—THE DIGITS AND SQUARE.

THIS is the correct solution.

2	1	9
3	4	8
5	6	7

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

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"SHE CLOSED HER EYES, HER HEAD BENT, AND MECHANICALLY HER FINGERS TORE THE PAPER INTO LITTLE PIECES THAT FLUTTERED PIECE BY PIECE TO THE FLOOR AT HER FEET."

(*See page* 389.)

A PICTURE-PLAY OF THIS STORY WILL SHORTLY BE PRODUCED AS ONE OF THE HEPWORTH-THURSTON FILMS.

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST.

By E. TEMPLE THURSTON.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

I.

IN the little town of St. Trond, before the war, M. de Berghem was a prosperous horticulturist. He supplied the British and German markets with bulbs, with roses, with flowering plants whose blossoms alone can pay you for your labour. They paid him well in every way, those flowering plants; what is more, there was many a garden in Germany and England, too, where his roses gave generous return for the care he had bestowed upon them. He often said—as when a man talks from the sanctuary of his ideals—that he asked no better than to see his flowers put their hands in their hidden pockets and bring out the riches of their blooms.

This, doubtless, was true enough of his sentiments; in the indulgence of which every man may be excused some mild exaggeration. It did not truly represent his business instincts. There is little doubt M. de Berghem was ambitious, or he might have thought twice of accepting the proposal of Herr Ernst Kleinenberg, head of a well-known firm of engineers in Berlin. The proposal was too tempting. Not only did it promise an increase of his business; it offered facilities for him to pursue his hobby of the establishment of new strains, the long, orange-trumpeted daffodil and a rose whiter than the Karl von Druschki. This is to mention but two of the experiments he was making in his greenhouses. To enlarge the entire premises was to gain space and improved conditions for his experiments. The firm of Kleinenberg was to advance the capital at a reasonable percentage. The only stipulation they made, which at the time seemed legitimate enough, was that only their workmen from Berlin should be employed in setting up the new plant and laying the foundations.

After some negotiations, all through the period of which M. de Berghem knew that he was going to consent in the end and they knew it as well as he, he signed papers and the deal was completed. This was towards the end of June in that year of 1914 which history has taken for itself. In a few days the workmen from Berlin had arrived, the ground was surveyed, and within a fortnight the foundations for the elaborate heating plant were being laid down.

Pointing them out to his daughter Anna, M. de Berghem said, "Those Germans are an industrious people. They waste no time."

Those early days of July saw Herr Ernst Kleinenberg a frequent visitor at M. de Berghem's house in St. Trond. From the beginning he found no favour with Anna, who, with that keen sex instinct of youth, distrusted him from their first meeting. As a mother, eager to see her daughter well married, Mme. de Berghem had none of these instincts. They go with youth; with youth they disappear.

She encouraged these visits until such time as she learnt from her husband that there was a Frau Kleinenberg in Berlin; that, indeed, the Herr had made no effort to conceal it. But the mischief had been done, so far as he was concerned. He did not hide his admiration for Anna. Flowers he brought her. In secret she gave them away. He came with boxes of sweets under his arm. She could not refuse them. He was a business friend. As a man of business, her father had nothing but praise for his enterprise. From a business friend she accepted these little gifts. As from a man, when once she was alone, she threw them away. But Herr Kleinenberg persisted in his attentions. With an obstinate perseverance, always keeping his approaches within the narrow limit of propriety, he did his best to win her affections. It must have been conspicuous even to him that he had failed.

And then, in the midst of those hurried negotiations, conducted in breathless speed between Austria and Serbia, it was realized in Europe that Germany had set her heart upon war. One Monday morning none of the Berlin

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workmen appeared at their labour where the foundations for the heating plant had just been laid. Even the Herr Kleinenberg made no appearance. During the course of the day M. de Berghem received a wire from Berlin to say that he had been detained in the capital on important business. But it was not until he read his papers in the morning of the next day that he realized the truth. The German army was mobilizing. Germany was urging for war.

The intervening days slipped away as though some thieving hand were stealing them from the lap of Time. Throughout Europe the telegraph wires were trembling with a thousand messages of hope, of threatening, of intrigue. And then, before anyone could scarcely believe it, it seemed, the German guns were barking like a herd of hungry dogs around the city of Liège.

Even then M. de Berghem had not that guile of mind to associate this ghastly horror of war with his dealings with the firm of Kleinenberg and Co.

"What will it mean to our contract?" he asked, like a child. "Will they withdraw their capital? Well, they've spent a good deal of money already and for nothing. I wonder when I shall hear from the Herr Kleinenberg telling me what they are going to do?"

M. de Berghem heard from the Herr. He heard all in good time. The tramp of the soldiers drew closer to St. Trond. They did not wait for Liège to fall. They surrounded it with their thousands and with their millions they marched on—on into the heart of that little country.

Even when he heard that their Belgian towns were infested with spies, signalling to the German gunners from church steeples and from towers, M. de Berghem was still blind to the significance of his ambitious deal with Kleinenberg and Co.

There came a day, in the sudden rush of those first days of war, when he found himself, with Anna and his wife, hiding in a cellar of their house in St. Trond, while the German shells burst in the streets above and the cries of wounded reached them through the grating.

For an hour it was as though they had been driven into a pit of hell, doomed to listen to the tortures of the damned. Then all was still. A quarter of an hour crawling by, one sluggish moment upon another, passed in heavy silence, and then the tread of measured feet beat like a pulse into their brains. St. Trond had fallen. St. Trond was in the hands of the enemy. Their St. Trond—their beautiful town! It no longer belonged to them.

Their hearts faltered as the sound of footsteps shuffled down the cellar-stairs. The door was tried. But the door was bolted. Then a knock fell heavily, and Mme. de Berghem fainted in her husband's arms.

II.

Captain Ernst Kleinenberg was in command of the troops and responsible for the behaviour of the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of St. Trond. He chose as his headquarters the residence of M. de Berghem. There could have been no element of coincidence about this. The Herr Captain was a man of influence, and he had his purposes. What is more, had he not been in St. Trond only a fortnight before, and had he not superintended some important work which had been executed in the vicinity?

To M. de Berghem's amazement, he had replied with that easy manner of his which almost belied his Prussian blood: "My dear M. de Berghem, in Germany we are all soldiers, and at a moment's notice. It is regrettable that I must make my headquarters in your house, but that is the irony of war. I will see you are comfortable elsewhere."

Elsewhere they were sent—a six-roomed cottage in the Rue Voisin—he, his wife, and Anna. A family of the highest repute in St. Trond living in a cottage in the Rue Voisin! Indeed the irony of war! Yet there have been greater ironies than that.

But it was not the irony of it which concerned M. de Berghem. From something which the Herr Captain had said to him in reply to his inquiry about their contract he had realized at last what those reinforced concrete foundations had been designed for. Furnaces for the heating-plant! They were for German guns. Guns to destroy his own Belgium! Guns to kill his fellow-countrymen! It was as though the furnaces had heated his blood when he thought how he had been duped.

He confided in Anna what it was his plan to do, and one night after dark, despite those regulations which were posted up in impeccable French throughout the town, he set out from his cottage in the Rue Voisin to accomplish it. Without avail, Anna had pleaded for permission to accompany him. He would go, he said, and he would go alone.

In her unlighted room, for all illumination must be extinguished—again by orders—after dark, Anna waited. She would know when he had done that which he meant to do. All St. Trond would know.

The silence of that little town—silent with the stillness of oppression under the German master—was broken that night with the violence of a heavy explosion. People tumbled from their beds and peered between the close-drawn blinds, and in the darkness lit up for one instant by the angry flash of light, M. de Berghem hurried down by the shutters of the shops in the Rue Voisin, and, softly opening the door of his cottage, stole into the room where Anna was waiting for him with eyes bright even in that darkness and a trembling hand to take his own.

He had succeeded. Those concrete foundations which the Berlin workmen had laid down with such admirable speed, with such excellent workmanship, were in a thousand pieces. No German gun would ever find its emplacement there to cry out to Belgium its messages of death.

They kept close within their cottage all the next day. That little dwelling-place in the Rue Voisin showed a quiet and innocent face to the world. But before evening a non-commissioned officer and two men of the German army were knocking heavily on the door.

With a sickness at her heart, Anna opened to them. In imperfect French they explained their orders. M. de Berghem was under arrest. He was to be brought at once before the Herr Captain.

Between the two soldiers, M. de Berghem was marched through the streets to his own house. One of the women of St. Trond seeing him in that little procession cried out of her window: "What has our good M. de Berghem done? Are they taking the old men from our homes as well as the babies from our breasts?"

They called back to her, her tongue would not live long in her mouth unless she taught it better speech than that.

The Herr Captain was no longer the affable gentleman who had taken up his headquarters in St. Trond. The concrete foundations which they were to have used for their guns had been blown up. On the night of their destruction, contrary to all the regulations of the Imperial Staff, M. de Berghem had been seen by a sentry creeping down the street in the shadows of the houses and entering his door in the Rue Voisin.

"By my contract with your firm," replied the simple old man, "those buildings were mine. It was a business speculation. The capital was yours—but you would have reaped its interest, and the enlargement of the premises was in my name. The business and all that belonged to it was mine."

"You admit the offence?" he was asked.

"I admit and deny nothing," M. de Berghem answered—"the private property of civilians is not at your disposal."

The Captain laughed.

"You may call your life your most private property, my dear M. de Berghem, but you will find that even that is at the disposal of our Emperor. When, I wonder, will the peaceful people of this peaceful Europe know that war is not a game with rules and regulations which must be adhered to, but a law which the boldest of us must obey? You talk of property as though possession in the hand were enough. What of the kind that has not power enough to close its fingers on that which it holds? Possession is the power to get and the power to hold. Belgium is ours to-day and France will be ours to-morrow. Who will take from us but those who can? And show me them, M. de Berghem. Search through Europe and show me those who can!"

For a while he sat watching his victim with a studied smile as the words penetrated the deeper comprehension of the truth in M. de Berghem's mind. With a shrug of the shoulders at last, he put aside the cloak of philosophy.

"I don't wish to be stern with you," he said, abruptly, "but the behaviour of the inhabitants of this neighbourhood is under my jurisdiction. You will always be a fool, M. de Berghem, so long as life gives you the opportunity—but I know you are a man with deep affections in the heart of your family. Go back to them. Spend your night in your wife's arms. Enjoy your daughter's kisses. A firing-party will take you to-morrow at dawn. Death is a cure for all our follies."

He waved his hand. M. de Berghem was free—free as a bird is free whose leg is tied to the open door of its cage.

He stood a moment looking down at his judge. Words of defiance were rising to his lips. But at a glance of Herr Kleinenberg's eyes towards the door he knew that words were sounds, no more, and sounds that would fall upon ears as deaf as the stones upon the road.

He lifted his head and walked out. There was no guard to accompany him. He went back to his house in the Rue Voisin, a free man, free to all the world of thought his mind was left to wander in.

III.

MME. DE BERGHEM was an opportunist. Perhaps in the short while he had made her acquaintance before the war Herr Kleinenberg had made that discovery. With a crafty mind, there is even reason to suppose he may have calculated on it. With calculation or without, she did the very thing he most desired.

Before the darkness of that night had fallen Mme. de Berghem had persuaded Anna to come with her to the Herr Captain's house and plead with him for the life of her father.

"Men will not listen to an old woman," she said—and no doubt she was right. But it was the reasoning of opportunism, and every woman knows what kind of reasoning that may be.

It was with difficulty Anna could be persuaded to appeal to the mercy of Herr Kleinenberg. Even when she had decided, it was against the wishes of her father that she went.

"The man's a devil!" he declared.

"The devil is open to persuasion," replied Mme. de Berghem.

It was to the devil, Anna felt in her heart, she was being led.

The Herr Captain's reception of them was the refinement of gallantry.

"I would," he said, "have paid my respects to Madame and Mademoiselle before, but——" A wide sweep of his hand indicated the papers strewn upon the table before him.

With the innocence of a child in those pale blue Teutonic eyes of his, he asked what it was to which he might attribute the honour of their visit.

Mme. de Berghem set free the floodgates of her tears and in genuine anguish appealed to him for the life of her husband.

He had done wrong—but he had done it in ignorance. He believed the property was his. He loved his country. What man did not? Would not the Herr Captain have done the same in his own fatherland? Was it a crime punishable by death to love one's country and to seek to protect one's own? He had done no harm to one soldier of the Kaiser's army. If it was to conquer the world, it would conquer the world, and one emplacement for their guns the more or the less would not hinder them.

There may have been—no doubt there was—a feeling of contempt in the Captain's mind as he listened to these arguments. But all the time his eyes were fixed on Anna's face, when no contempt was discernible.

He listened without interruption until Mme. de Berghem had had her say. Then, as though her arguments might as well be discounted altogether, he said :—

"And what has Mademoiselle to say?"

Feeling the uselessness of argument, Anna replied :—

"We have come to beg you for my father's life. You will grant it or you will not. You can do either. If you have any heart at all you will not keep us in suspense."

There is little doubt he admired her for that brevity. A predisposition to admiration stood in no manner in his way.

"I can or I cannot grant a favour, Mademoiselle," he replied. "That is true enough. It is also true that one does not give in this world without something in return. What have you to offer?"

She was silent. Only her eyes spoke. That answer which any man is quick enough to read. Yet from the imperturbable expression on the Herr Captain's face it would have appeared he had read nothing.

"You don't know what to offer," said he. "I will tell you, then. These soldiers here are clumsy housekeepers. I am uncomfortable in this house. If you, Mademoiselle, who know the place well, will come and look after me, provide my meals, attend—not as a servant, there are men to do such work as that—to my comforts, you will be well recompensed. You will be expected to do—nothing—against your will. This is what you can offer, and your father is a free man."

To Mme. de Berghem's ears, almost to Anna's too, it seemed as if he spoke fair, as we say in our tongue. Yet even then Anna, with that suspicion of her sex, would not have consented had not the opportunism of her mother interfered. There were arguments plain enough to her outweighing that suspicion. Her father's life! And once she had seen in her mind those patient eyes of M. de Berghem pleading with her not to undertake this mission her heart gave way. Would she not do anything for him?

"I go to Bruxelles to-morrow morning, Mademoiselle. I shall be away for a week, perhaps—perhaps more. If you will take up your duties to-morrow, you may carry the order for release to M. de Berghem when you leave to-night."

The order for his release! Her father's life against the servitude to this enemy of her people. Who could have weighed it in the mind more than just for one instant's contemplation?

And he was going away. For a week he would not be there. What might not happen in a week? Every day they were waiting for the rolling back of those German hordes. In a week—perhaps more—all of them might be free from the yoke of servitude.

She bent her head. She gave her word.

IV.

Captain Kleinenberg was true to his word. On the morrow, having welcomed Anna and given her his instructions, he departed for Bruxelles. The clatter of rifle-butts grounded after the salute, the spurt of the engine as the car sped away down the street—these were sounds that quietened Anna's heart as she listened behind the jalousies.

For six days she heard no more of him, spending her time alone in the house, living with memories; trying, but trying in vain, to blot out the horror of suffering all about her.

From day to day the news grew worse. Namur—that great fortress of Namur—had fallen. With a breath, it seemed, their hope in that stronghold had been blown away. They will be held up at Namur, all the townsfolk had whispered amongst themselves. But with one blast of its evil breath, the whirlwind had swept on.

One thing there was for gratitude. Of the many who had disappeared—vanished where they knew they would never see them again—her father remained. His life had been spared. Every day she went down to the Rue Voisin, sitting an hour with him, holding his hand, talking of the war, planning the escape that was always a hope in their hearts. If they could steal through the German lines, Antwerp was still a city of refuge. Every day the boats were leaving there for England.

And then one evening, concealed in a little basket of vegetables her father had sent round, she found a note telling that old Martel—one of their workmen in the days of peace—had been ordered to take a load of hay up to the German lines. Escape lay that way. M. de Berghem instructed her to meet the haycart the next evening at nine o'clock at the first signpost out of St. Trond on the road to Diest.

She was slipping the precious message in the bosom of her dress, when those same sounds, the click of rifles at salute, the purring of a motor's engine, which had stilled her heart before, now set it throbbing in her breast. She took the letter out of her dress and burnt it, holding it in her fingers till the ashes broke.

The sex instinct of fear had warned her. Before the door opened and the face of the Herr Captain appeared smiling before her she had known who it was.

"I came back a day sooner than I expected, Mademoiselle. Everything is going well. War is easy. The French are in retreat at Charleroi. It is the debacle of your good neighbours. A handful of British have been pitched against our mighty army at Mons. A morsel of food for our cannon, Mademoiselle. One could almost pity them were they not so swollen with their own pride. Eighty thousand men! The Army of Great Britain! *Mein Gott!* Let us have some food and forget about their miseries. I am a man with a kind heart. It hurts me to think of them."

News for her aching heart! The British, the French—both had failed them. In a few days even Antwerp, their beautiful Antwerp, would be in the hands of these conquerors. And then to be asked to share his meal with him! To refuse and to be commanded.

"I was told I should have to do nothing against my will," she reminded him.

"SHE TOOK IT AND READ THE ORDER FOR HER FATHER'S DEATH BY A SHOOTING-PARTY AT DAWN."

He smiled and bowed admission.

"However, there is wisdom, Mademoiselle—even in so small a matter as this."

His meaning went home deeper than he thought. In the light of that hope, now burning brightly in her heart, it was wisdom to acquiesce.

While she laid the table he departed to his room to change his dusty clothes. Some half-hour later there came down to the meal an immaculately-dressed officer of that Prussian regiment to which, he said, it was his honour to belong.

All through the first part of that meal he talked to her engagingly of life in Berlin. Some woman, she thought, casting a glance at him beneath her eyes, some woman—women, perhaps—have given their hearts to him. Then with the thought the vision, and with the vision that shudder through all the fibres of her sex.

She watched him drinking heavily from that wine out of her father's cellars. He will want to sleep soon, she said to herself. One night and one day and then she would be free! But in those simple quantities of which M. de Berghem had partaken she had never seen the effects of wine. The fatigue of his journey was lifted from him. He became more amusing, more daring in the things he said. Again and again he brought the blood all hot and rushing to her cheeks, and with ever-increasing infatuation watched it come and go.

At last she knew—knew as she had known, by instinct, of his return—the vile determination in his mind. One hope she clung to. Nothing—he had said—nothing should she do against her will, and had acknowledged that promise only a few moments before, as they sat down to their meal. Did men go back upon their promises? In that school of her father's tutelage she had been taught that they did not. Yet what the Germans had done as a nation to her beloved Belgium, might they not do, each man, in the desire and arrogance of their power?

His hand stretched out across the table and touched hers. His head and shoulders bent nearer. He muttered to her hotly beneath his breath. Even in that solitude he dared not speak it loud.

When she flung back her chair and stood, all trembling to her feet, he smiled in admiration at the superb dignity it gave her. It was a higher prize to win than that which many another he knew had won, their victims shrieking and biting in their arms. It was her will he wanted, as he watched her then.

So she stood, her breath drawing quick, and looking anywhere in that room but at him.

"You will excuse me," she said, presently, "if I leave you to your meal."

He told her quietly it was finished, and drained his glass to point his words.

"And, Mademoiselle," he added, in the same tone of voice, "forgive me if I say—you have been so wise till now."

Then he meant it—to use his power! What she had feared of his promise, the characteristic of his whole race, that was true. Each man was as them all. In the arrogance of power, Germany and German men, they held their promises of no account.

"Your promise," she said, nevertheless; for if hope had gone, speech need not betray it. "Nothing against my will."

"It shall be kept, Mademoiselle," he replied. "I am a man of sentiment. Your will is what I wish."

She stared at him in horror. She asked what he meant. There were words unspoken in his voice. More than ever she felt her fear.

"My only meaning is—be wise, Mademoiselle. Wisdom is a priceless thing when we are faced with the inviolable laws of life."

Faced with the inviolable laws? That had but one meaning to her. He was playing with her fears. Already feeling his hands upon her, she turned swiftly to the window, pulled back the catch, and flung it open. Then stopped, and not because he followed, but because he sat still, smiling there in his chair at the head of the table.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"Call for help," she muttered; "there is none for me in this house."

He rose slowly from his chair and took the seat at his desk, where all his papers lay and a box of cigars was ready at his hand.

"It is the law," he told her, quietly, "and has been issued by proclamation, that no one is allowed out after dark on penalty of death. Do you imagine a man is going to risk his neck because a woman cries out in the darkness? Your people are used to women's cries now. We've trained them to all that. They have had to be trained."

She turned from the open window. Whether it were true or not, that casual voice of his made it seem so. She put her fingers to her mouth, from which her sobbing was as yet but part of the breath she took, and she bit the flesh about her nails.

"I am going to my people, then," said she; "I shall be safe there."

He bent his head, almost as though in agreement that it were a thing she well might do.

"Look out of that window," he advised her first, before he let her go. She looked, and there was a sentry with fixed bayonet pacing to and fro. "He has his orders," he continued, quietly.

"Let him obey his orders, then," and she strode to the door.

He shook his head and smiled. Every movement, every tone of her voice, glance of her eye, was appraising her value. Some men become connoisseurs of women. After that fashion he sat and watched her, knowing the ultimate price.

"It's not our wish to shoot women," he told her. "We only do it when we must. In Germany we are more courteous to women than in any other country in the world. We shrine our women-folk in our homes and we honour them."

"Are you honouring your wife?" she asked him.

"My wife is in Berlin," he replied, as though surprised at her question. "My home is in Berlin. I am in Belgium."

She turned away in despair.

"Why not be wise, Mademoiselle?" he went on. "I cannot allow a daughter of one of the principal citizens of St. Trond to be shot in the streets. When we kill, it is with a purpose. There would be no purpose in that. Why not be wise?"

"What is this cant of wisdom?" she cried out, bitterly. "All that is wise to me is the wish you said you would respect."

"All?" he questioned, and, looking at her once, turned his chair round to his desk, where for a moment he wrote in silence broken only by the scratching of his pen. When he had finished he turned, handing her the paper. She took it and read the order for her father's death by a shooting-party at dawn, and the words as she stared at them became hieroglyphs that danced a dance of death on the sheet of paper before her eyes.

"You are free to exercise your will, Mademoiselle," he said, as still she stared at it. "But that is the wisdom I spoke of."

The warrant for her own death, that would have been welcome; that she could have read and it would have reached her understanding with a sense of release. She could not understand this. The brutality of it was unbelievable. She had been brought up to believe in the intrinsic goodness that ran like a seam of gold through all the coarsest strata of their crust of life. But this was intrinsically evil. Even in those last few days she had heard such stories of vileness as could not before have found place in her wildest imagination. But the men who had committed them had been drunk with the blood of war. Here was one who appeared the most imperturbable of all she had seen in the midst of this horror that was about them. If ever a man had coolness for consideration to make the best of that goodness which must be in him, it seemed it must be he.

She could not believe the writing on that paper. It was untrue! A trap to catch her, a ruse to gain her consent! It was not only that she could not, but she would not believe it true. Her own danger was the more apparent to her then. At the edge of an abyss she stood and could see only the horror of the depth into which her body must fall.

Wherefore when after a long silence, watching her, he said, "Are you going to be wise, Mademoiselle?" she flung him back his answer with all the spirit that was in her.

"My father would sooner die," she cried, "than that such a shame as this should happen to me!"

And it was true enough, but as yet she had not thought whether she could let him die.

It could never come to that. Slowly and with calculated deliberation he was ringing the bell, but that was all a part of the trick to win her. She stood there waiting, twisting and turning the paper all unconsciously in her fingers.

When, in the confusion of her brain, she heard the sound of footsteps approaching the door, she turned, looking at him, for the first time appealing to that seam of the gold she had learnt was in the nature of all men, to be found always somewhere, somehow, even in the most evil moment of their lives.

"I have given you my answer," she said, gently. "May I go to my room?"

The door opened and an orderly entered with that hard, metallic clicking of the heels which, as a sound, had come in those few days to her to mean the inexorable fate, the unavoidable destiny.

The Herr Captain looked at her steadily.

"Certainly, Mademoiselle," he replied. "You are free to go. May I be permitted to hope you sleep well." Then as she turned away, none too hopeful even yet in the heaviness of her heart, he added: "I will take that paper before you go."

In an instant she had come round upon her heel.

"What are you going to do with it?"

He smiled, and in his smile conveyed that this was a matter she had allowed to pass out of her dispensation.

"The orderly is waiting," he said, quietly, and held out his hand.

Then all thought of herself seemed to lose its weight in her mind. She had bargained. That was how it appeared. She had bargained and she had lost. The remembrance of those days when they had talked and planned their escape—the thought of those two waiting there in that house in the Rue Voisin, counting the hours before old Martel was to steal them away into safety; a sudden vision of the father who as yet had meant the love of a man in her life, of him facing the line of rifles, of that sharp order, of his body sinking down in the death, the splashing of blood, perhaps a bullet tearing his face, all the horrors of death, all the agony of severance—these obliterated every thought of the abyss upon which she stood. What mattered beside the thought of saving him—saving him for himself, for her mother, and for her own sake as well?

"I can't give you this paper," she muttered. "I can't! How could I? I can't!"

"Is it your wish to tear it up, Mademoiselle?" he inquired.

She closed her eyes, her head bent, and mechanically her fingers tore the paper into little pieces that fluttered piece by piece to the floor at her feet.

The Herr Captain turned to the orderly.

"You can go," said he.

Her eyes were still closed.

All she heard was the click of the orderly's heels and the respectful closing of the door.

V.

THE next evening, as darkness was falling and soon after eight o'clock, old Martel and his cart-load of hay could be seen toiling out of the little town of St. Trond on the road to Diest. They little thought who saw that loose hay piled high on the wagon what burden old Martel was carrying, or how willingly he was risking his life for their good M. de Berghem. It looked a peaceful occupation that; hard to reconcile it with the savageries of war that were ravaging the land. But a Uhlan's lance thrust into that innocent-looking wagon-load would soon have turned the scene into one that was all in keeping with the brutalities of war. There would have been a woman's cries, men's oaths, the sound of a few swift gun-shots, and the little tragedy would have played itself out.

But no inquisitive lance of a chance Uhlan sought the matter out. From the window of her room overlooking the street Anna watched old Martel drive by. Picture to yourself the bitter confusion of emotions beating a measure in her heart—shame, gladness, fear, pity, and all the trains of thought leading from one to the other. And after that the part that she must play herself before she could contrive to meet them on the road to Diest. There was no time for emotion when once she had seen the haycart go by. There had been the little wisp of ribbon tied on to old Martel's whip—the signal, prearranged, to let her know they were safely concealed, and that she must follow them without delay.

Without delay, all she could do must be done then. She hurried downstairs. The Herr Captain was seated at his desk. Orders were there, a sheaf of them, to be signed. The British Army was retreating from Mons—beaten, he had told her; beaten, he may well have believed. Ten thousand troops were passing through St. Trond the next day; fresh troops from Berlin, as they poured through for many a day after that. He had plenty of work to do, yet he looked round eagerly as she entered the room. What was it she wanted? He was busy, but if she wanted anything, let her say it.

"I came to know," she replied, gently, "if there was anything I could do for you."

He stared at her, twisting round in his chair. Anything she could do for him! And as he watched her he could almost have believed she smiled. Not a smile of humour, not even one of bitterness, but of better understanding; as though she had made the discovery he was not such a bad sort of fellow after all. For, was he? His pride swelled to answer that catechism of his conscience. He was not so bad. In return for the slightest response from her he would treat her well enough. There were women in Berlin would think her honoured. And here already was her first promise of response. It was quick, that glimpse of it. He had never expected it so soon. Well, but why not? What was there really for any woman to dislike in him? Indeed, his experience of women had been—and then a memory brought a smile into his face as well—a smile of contented satisfaction.

"If there is nothing I can do," she continued, observing that smile, "I would ask you to give me permission to go and see my mother. The strain of these few days has been heavy for her. I heard to-day she was not well."

He stretched out his hand.

"Come here," said he.

She came obediently, submitting to the hand that caught at hers when she had reached his side.

"You don't mean you want to go away and nurse her?"

"Oh, no! She is not so ill as that."

"How long will you be?"

"An hour—perhaps two."

"No more than two? In two hours this business will be finished. Then you will come back here to me?"

She bent her head and, notwithstanding all the shame it cost her, made no resistance as he drew her into his arms.

"Nothing—against your will," he laughed in her ear, and let her go.

She could have played that part scarce a moment longer. It seemed interminable, those few steps across the room until she reached the door which would hide her from him. But how had she played it at all, and so successfully as this? In those few hours between one day and another how had she learnt, in all her innocence of life, the way to play a woman of the world? Does the sex-instinct which betrays the man, of its blind impulses defend the woman? She knew she had won, yet shuddered at her winning.

But there was all to do and no time for thought. There was a pathway across the fields which led towards the first sign-post on the road to Diest. She went by this, keeping close to the hedges, though the fields were empty.

Many miles away on the horizon she could see the flashing of the guns. The faint thunder of them in her ears was a constant spur to caution. And when she came out on to the high road there was the haycart and old Martel, busy seeing to some fault in his harness to account for his delay, but with eyes ever searching down the road for sight of her.

It was a matter of two moments to conceal her with the others. Even the memory of shame went from her with the first touch of her father's hand. She broke into a gentle sobbing as she lay up against his shoulder, tears of gladness, relief; tears that a woman must weep lest worse befall her.

Then old Martel mounted to his seat and drove on, bumping and jolting with the creaking springs of his old wagon into the darkness, and so there passed the honoured family of de Berghem from their home, their native town, from their loved Belgium into the sanctuary of a strange land.

VI.

Sir Charles and Lady Standish, squire and dame of Wakefield Manor, Hertfordshire, had one of the most beautiful gardens in the country.

Five gardeners before the war soon dwindled down to one old man and a boy when once they began calling men to the Colours. When the head gardener, a man of thirty-five, came into Sir Charles's study and said he wanted to be off with the rest, the squire had not argued the matter out with Greyson. He just held out his hand, and when the gardener grasped it shook it hard. Then he nodded in the direction of the garden.

"It can wait for you," he said—"till you come back."

The garden waited for Greyson: for once a gardener gets to know and love his soil, to no man will it be so generous as to him. But it did not wait in idleness. In answer to an advertisement Sir Charles put in the paper for assistance in the garden there came M. de Berghem, a Belgian refugee, with the best of credentials and an experience of horticulture which in theory, if not in practice in the manor garden, surpassed that of Greyson.

Sir Charles took to him at once.

"But I've only got a man and a boy," said he. "I don't employ any man who's fit to carry a gun. If you'd like any female labour, I'll try——"

M. de Berghem here interposed.

"My daughter, monsieur," said he; "she has worked often with me in Belgium."

Anna was engaged forthwith, and when one morning Lady Standish found a dark-eyed girl, with a strange depth of expression in her face, weeding in the herbaceous border she discovered a warm interest stirring in her mind. They talked in French. Anna told her of that escape from St. Trond in old Martel's haycart. She told the story simply, with no searching for the dramatic values. Sadness was the note of it.

"*Figurez-vous, madame,*" she concluded, "*si vous etiez poussé loin de votre jardin.*"

Perhaps that sentence brought the tragedy of it most of all to the heart of Lady Standish. Impulsively she invited this quiet girl to tea with her that afternoon when her work was done. Then sitting on the terrace later at that meal where women make most of their friendships or their enmities, they tacitly sealed a bond of common interest.

From that onwards Anna was constantly asked to the midday meal with her father; frequently, when his wish was to return to Mme. de Berghem and their little cottage in the village, she stayed to dinner alone.

As often as possible in that first year or so of the war, they entertained during week-ends at Wakefield Manor. There were men they knew, working at the war-pitch for the six days, who were glad enough to wake up on Sunday mornings to the sweet air that blew across that garden. James Ingledew, whose aeroplanes had contributed in no small measure to the supremacy of England in the air, was one of them. Throwing all responsibilities off his shoulders for the thirty-six hours, he came down on Saturday night, his first visit since that dread August Bank Holiday, 1914, expecting to find the lawns at Wakefield Manor laid down for hay.

After dinner on Saturday night, he was taken out into the garden by his host and shown the same velvet grass, the same flowers, ghost-white in the moonshine, rising with their damp, night perfume out of the herbaceous borders.

"To-morrow morning," said Lady Standish, "I'll show you the spirit of the garden. She comes on Sundays after Mass—just to look round—just because she loves it all. And her father's an expert. Finding them of course was the greatest luck in the world."

Lady Standish had somehow had it in her mind, and as it was in her mind so it happened. Ingledew fell in love. At that first meeting

" AS SHE LEANT INTO THE ARMS HE HELD ABOUT HER, HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE THEN TO BREAK THE TENDERNESS OF SUCH A MOMENT BY TELLING HIM SHE COULD NOT LOOK WITH ABSOLUTE STRAIGHTNESS INTO HIS EYES ? "

in the first words he had spoken in halting French and the first she had answered with a laugh in halting English, the something which says in an instant to a man—" Here is the world for you "—had spoken to him then.

As they walked away, Lady Standish asked him whether he would like her to ask Anna to dinner that evening. It was the woman's pride — assuring herself that she was right. The next moment she was calling over her shoulder to Anna, giving her the invitation as casually as those invitations had become.

Ingledew took her in to dinner. With the imperfect English she had acquired then, she was a silent partner, but listened, full of interest, to all that was said.

" Can you understand, Mademoiselle ? " he asked her, in a moment's pause, " Can you follow the conversation ? "

" Yes—every word. Please don't worry because I like to be silent. It has much interest all that you say," and then added, " I am quite happy," as though she wished to exonerate him of all obligations to her.

And so she listened that evening at dinner, with eyes turning from one to the other as they spoke. When the conversation pivoted upon a notorious society beauty, Anna's eyes were fixed upon one of the other guests, delivering that verdict which only women give of their own sex.

" Beauty doesn't excuse her," she declared. " If she chooses to exploit it as she does, she must pay the penalty."

Anna shot a glance at Ingledew. By a movement of his lips she knew he was waiting to speak, and his words when he said them were like chips of stone striking in her face from the stone-mason's chisel.

" I bet she'd give all her beauty," said he, quietly, " to be able to look one man straight in the face."

Anna stared at the bowl of roses on the table before her, and as she stared one bloom, over-blown, dropped its blood-red petals on the dead-white cloth, and as they fell they seemed like little pieces of paper fluttering down upon her heart when each one as it fell had the weight and heaviness of lead.

VII.

Love came swiftly to those two as, when it is most wonderful, love does come. The next three Sundays in succession saw Ingledew down at Wakefield Manor, a willing servant to the interested schemes of Lady Standish for the deep-eyed Anna.

On the fourth Sunday after their first meeting he found himself the only guest at Wakefield and alone, that evening after dinner, with Anna, in the garden she had come to love as her own.

The scent of stocks, the night-odour of roses, the hedge of sweetbrier, and the soft turf under their feet, these and passion beating in their pulses in burning measure to their thoughts—some lovers could not ask for more.

As she leant into the arms he held about her, how was it possible then to break the tenderness of such a moment by telling him she could not look with absolute straightness into his eyes? But she would tell him some day. Before they were married he must know, not that there was one real moment of shame in her life, but that she was not the thing he thought her—the thing he compared her with—that white lily in the herbaceous border. A pale bud it was, in the star-light, waiting to open the lips of its petals for the first time to the morrow's sun.

It was not so much that her conscience smote her bitterly as that, loving him, she needed in herself he should know all that she was, all she had suffered, all that she knew. In some manner she did not offer to dissect, this necessity made the completion of that dream to which her whole heart had given itself. Without such fulfilment of her vision, the whole conception of beauty she had made of life would have seemed tainted, not so much with the shame of what had been forced upon her as in the sense that the truth was all a part of that beauty.

In the months that had passed, the keen remembrance of ugliness had been blurred as the glass of a mirror taking the breath of Time upon its surface. Whenever she had thought of Herr Kleinenberg, as when she read the passing events of the war, she pictured him dead—a thing that had no longer even the meaning of hatred for her. But this love that had come so suddenly to her with its disturbing passion, just when she was finding the quiet contentment of thought that she would always be happy in that garden, swept clear in one moment the face of her mirror, when all the horror of that night returned to her, magnified a thousand times in its distinctness.

Yet when later she tried to tell her lover of it all, she found it more difficult than she had supposed. With the growth of love came the birth of fear. She began questioning herself of what he would say. She became the more conscious she could not bear to lose him.

But at last, one night, in the late autumn of that year, when they were walking through the garden, passing the same spot where first he had kissed her, she summoned her courage in the darkness and clung the more closely to his arm.

"Do you call yourself an idealist?" she began, planning the moves she was to take when once his answer was given. But she had not wholly foreseen what his answer would be.

"Men come to my age," said he, "with mighty few ideals. Everything in life contrives to shatter them one by one. A little while ago I should have said I had none. Can you imagine what it means then, at forty-three, to have found the most wonderful ideal in the world?"

"What's that?" she asked him, knowing well he meant her, but not as yet understanding, because the whole of her mind had been ready for any answer but this.

For answer he took her face in his hands and, close against her lips, he said: "I've got an ideal now that nothing can shatter."

All the current of her courage went from her then, escaping from every fibre of her body like a charge that returns to earth. She was left alone in her mind with her fear.

So she failed again, and the more easily failed the third time and the fourth. But a few days before her wedding, come what might, she had set her will to let him know; yet though her mind was made up, still sought her mother's advice.

In the sanctuary of her bedroom she made her confession half in whispers, partly in tears, at Mme. de Berghem's knees. This was the first confession she had made, keeping silence even in the presence of her priest.

The opportunism of Mme. de Berghem never had greater stimulus for its expression than then. When she heard it was Anna's intention to tell Ingledew everything she threw up her hands in the gesticulation of horror. This was madness! It was the act of a foolish, romantic girl who would treat love as a confessional where every lover was a priest living the imitation of Christ.

"A man never marries a woman!" she cried out, in her fear that this excellent match would be broken. "He marries an ideal!"

From this point of view Anna consented to weigh the whole matter again with those weights in the measure of her mother's wisdom of the world. Mme. de Berghem left her in her room; but she was far from satisfied in her mind with the decision her daughter was about to make.

In a fever of apprehension she walked to and fro downstairs, until the uncertainty of it could no longer be borne. Coming softly to her daughter's room once more, she found Anna writing a letter, and knew then her suspicions had been justified. As their little maid-of-all-work took the letters to the post Mme. de Berghem intercepted her. She would take them herself with her own, she said. No sooner was she alone than she found it, that letter to Ingledew her suspicions had warned her of. Without a moment's pause for conscience she tore it open.

There was the folly of it and that soft-hearted, romantic request that if, when he knew, she was the same to him, he would never speak of it again. She would know then, she would understand he had accepted her as she was; but if there were any change in him, she declared no eyes would be quicker than her own to detect it.

Would she keep to that contract? Would

she be content with the same affection he was bound to show her? Mme. de Berghem was too confirmed an opportunist to refuse the risk. She tore the letter up and buried the pieces in the hedge as she went to the post-office, and three days later Anna was married from Wakefield Manor with all such festivities as had she been Lady Standish's own daughter.

He had done as she had asked him. Never had be betrayed one moment's difference in the warmth of his affection; never once even hinted of the existence of that letter she believed he had received. Wonderful, then, a paradise of days, as that honeymoon was to her, she yet came to a consciousness of the want of absolute contentment.

Hunting for the cause of that in her own mind, she found the realization that it was because so implicitly he had obeyed her request. It was not that she wanted to recount her story with those more mitigating details which surely must have absolved any woman from shame. It was more that the burial of those moments in her life had had no definite obsequies in the tender blessing of his voice. She wanted to hear him say, once and for all, she was no different in his eyes, and then never to speak of it again.

Lying awake one morning while he had gone down to the sea for a bathe in one of those little bays of the rocks the coast of Cornwall has designed for swimmers, she came to the conclusion she would speak that day; would ask for something more than the silent admission of his acceptance.

Once this decision was made, her heart rose higher into the realms of that Paradise he had brought her to.

He came up from his bathe, bringing her the letters from the post-office, and while he went up to dress she sat on the veranda in that Cornish sun and opened a letter from her mother—the first she had received from anyone addressed to—Mrs. Ingledew.

In their absence Mme. de Berghem had been assailed by doubts of the risk she had taken. Time to reflect had shown her the predicament in which her daughter might be placed were she to break of her own accord that contract she had made. She wrote telling Anna everything she had done, begging for forgiveness, pleading she knew she had done it for the very best.

So Anna sat there in the sunshine, just muttering to herself: "Too late—too late!" knowing now the fear for her greater happiness would never rise to courage again, knowing and, in her knowledge, oblivious of the tears that were streaming down her cheeks.

VIII.

UNTIL the birth of her first child Anna wrestled often in the wilderness with her conscience. The conviction that Herr Kleinenberg had long gone to swell that great list of German casualties supported her not a little in the keeping of her silence.

Six million casualties! Surely of that multitude he must be one! Nearly two million dead! How could he, amongst the first to serve, have escaped the sweeping destiny of such numbers as those?

But once a baby was in her arms and at her breast the past became blotted out, almost as though it had never existed. The sense of completion to the purpose of her life ignored it. By the time the war was drawing to its close she had almost left the memory of Belgium behind her, and in that house with its garden which Ingledew had bought for themselves some distance out of London had become the English country-woman, learning the English ideals, training herself with swift adaptability to the English ways.

Eager she was, too, and interested for his ambitions. Before peace was declared he had entered Parliament, and was soon recognized as one of the well-balanced moderate minds which turned to value in the scales against the extreme Jingoism of certain parties created by the downfall of Germany.

In the days subsequent to the long-sought Peace which followed the defeat of the German arms in France and Belgium Ingledew showed those same moderate tendencies which at no moment in his career could have been construed into any other object than that of a deep patriotism. It was he, foremost amongst all and against his trade ambitions, who spoke in the House against the advisability of an Aerial Post with Germany. In those days he believed firmly in making the German people realize the spirit of disgust they had created throughout the world.

"They must be made to understand," he said in the House, "that communication with the outside world will be granted to them only as a concession." But in three years' time found himself, with the long-proved characteristics of his race, ready to give those concessions rather than bear feelings of enmity once the fight was finished.

In the year 1922 there came before the House a Bill for the concession of an Aerial Post with Germany, and it was understood that Ingledew would support it.

With this understanding there came to his office at the factory a M. Barradell, representing a large aeroplane factory in Belgium. Placing before him a strong statement showing the effect upon the aeroplane trade which the withholding of this concession to Germany had had, M. Barradell had urged him to use his influence in the House to have the embargo removed. His arguments were clear and convincing. Already inclined to that purpose, Ingledew listened with the closest attention to all he had to say. But his promise could not be given then and there. It needed further discussion before he could pledge himself to any definite course of action.

Taking a liking to the man, attracted by his intelligence, he invited him down into the country for the week-end.

"You needn't bring a dinner jacket if you don't like," said he; "we haven't grown out of our war-time simplicities yet."

They arrived together by car on the Friday evening. Anna was upstairs in the nursery

when they came, slave and mother to her new baby. There Ingledew told her about their guest.

"You'll hear a lot of business," he said, "but I expect you'll follow it with interest. He's here to persuade me to something I've already nearly decided to do. I just want to draw him out—that's all."

She came down to dinner, finding their guest alone in the hall. At the sound of her footsteps, he turned from the window where he was looking out into the garden. In this manner Anna de Berghem met Herr Kleinenberg after eight years.

For a long moment they stared at each other, unable the one or the other to break the silence of their amazement. At last he spoke. The greater hazard was with him.

"I never knew, madame——" he began.

"M. Barradell, I think my husband said," she replied.

He brought his heels together as he bowed and she heard again across the distance of those years the click of spurs, the rattle of rifles at salute, the cries of women, and the sound of guns.

When, the next instant, Ingledew came downstairs, he found them—his wife and his guest—already introduced.

IX.

THE past had come back. The fate of those two million dead had not claimed him. She sat through the first half-hour of that meal in the stupor of one who has not yet realized the certainty between the dream life may be and the reality it is.

Then gradually, as they warmed to their arguments of the business it was their purpose to discuss, she awakened to the sudden insight of what was taking place. The same thing was happening all over again, as had happened to her father before the war. Here was the German again, driven this time to the need of disguise, stealthily, in the excuse of trade, laying his preparations for that domination of the world, for which the Peace had still given him cause for hope.

No longer was it gun-emplacements they needed for their *coup d'assommoir*, but a mastery in the air, the possibility of which this embargo of the British Government denied them. It came in a clear flash to her mind, untaught though it might be in the intricacies of international intrigue, and with it sprang up the sense of duty, jeopardizing that happiness she had by then believed to be irrevocably her own. How could she tell now, after all these years? Yet how, if such trickery was about, could she keep silence?

With a thousand thoughts rushing in conflicting purposes through her mind, she listened in bewilderment to her husband as he said:—

"Certainly I'm beginning to believe that trust, even of one's enemies, gets the best result. The whole civilization must rest on a basis of trust, or we return to barbarism."

She laughed aloud, yet succeeded in forcing a gentle note of affection into her laughter, for she was laughing at the innocence of the man she loved.

"Didn't we trust before the war?" she asked; "and did that prevent Germany from returning to the most brutal methods of barbarism?"

Ingledew stretched out his hand and pressed hers as it lay on the table.

"Bless your heart," he said, "I know that's a sore point with you. But here's M. Barradell, a Belgian. He suffered, too, but he knows how many of the stories we heard at that time were given us just to inflame our passions of revenge, to stimulate the spirit for war. We painted the Germans as bad as we could—that is war. That's the way of it."

"Oh, how British that is!" she exclaimed, unable any longer to conceal the fear of her mind. Splendid though they had all been, those British people; splendid as she found them always, they had not learnt their lesson of life from the ravages of war. They had not learnt how, in the intoxication of power, man became drunk and vile and all the beast of his nature came out of him.

"You think those stories you heard were exaggerations," she went on, excitedly. "Why, I knew a girl in Belgium——" and then of a sudden, before she knew really what she did, was telling in the third person, her own story in all the crude brutality of its details.

"Can you trust such a people as that!" she cried, when she had finished and her eyes flashed across at the pallid look of apprehension in M. Barradell's face.

Ingledew, indeed both of them, had listened without interruption, rapt in attention with the vivid narration of her story.

"Yes—yes—I know," Ingledew replied, when she had finished. "You heard that story told. We've all heard stories, not so brutal and cold-blooded, perhaps—but stories like that which were meant to heat our blood to the boiling-point. The Germans heard and read the same kind of stories about us. But stories like that have lost their purpose now."

"Lost their purpose!" she cried. "There's no purpose in that but its truth. That was true!"

X.

ALL that night Anna lay through the still watches, having no desire for sleep. Here was the parting of the ways, and she must choose between the hazard of her happiness and the cheerless path of duty. Once in the night she crept from her bed and stole with silent feet to the nursery.

Was the canker of discontent and unhappiness to come between her life and these peacefully sleeping creatures who asked for happiness, no more, from one day to another; whose little fingers, moreover, seemed to touch it wherever they went?

Anna rose early the next morning, sun in the garden calling her from that bed in which for the last few hours it had been no less than a penance to lie. In her favourite corner of the garden, out of sight of the house, where she felt more alone than in the privacy of her own room,

she fought with her conscience to the conclusion her heart prompted.

The happiness of those children, the happiness of her home—these were worth more than anything in the world beside. The time had passed when she could have told him. She had had the courage, but no proof to show she had used it as she had. It needed more than mere courage now. Now it must be a matter of desperation, and was the situation so desperate as all that? What could Germany do now in any sense as they had done before the war? Nations were unsuspicious then. Could they be said to be unsuspicious now? Was she not making out of this molehill the mountain which experience had recalled to her in the apparently genuine behaviour of Herr Kleinenberg before the war? What opportunity would an aerial postal service make for Germany, except these advantages of trade for which this so-called M. Berradell was pleading?

"WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD TO HER HE SEIZED A HUNTING-CROP FROM ITS PEG IN THE HALL AND STRODE OUT INTO THE GARDEN."

Conscience was fooling her. She clenched her fists as they lay on her lap. She would not speak. He must know the danger for him in that house and he would keep away.

Coming to this decision, she stood up, determination in her eyes, setting her lips thin, giving her a moment's courage to face the remainder of those days till Herr Kleinenberg was gone. But all that courage went from her as he appeared round the belt of nut-trees and stood there facing her—and alone.

"I saw you come out into the garden from my window, madame," he began.

She failed, she said, to see his reasons for following her.

But he had had his reasons, and the best in the world. He had wanted to speak to her last

night. The opportunity had not offered. It had offered now and he had taken it.

"I want to tell you, madame," he said, "how glad I am to see you so happy. I want to tell you," he added, significantly, "how wise you seem to me to preserve that happiness."

With a catch of fear at her heart, she asked him what he meant by that last remark.

"I mean," said he, "that I realize from the telling of your story last night that you have been wise enough to keep silence—with your husband. You were always wise, madame, and knowing men as I do, there is no necessity for me to advise you to keep that wisdom. Believe me it will repay you well. You have nothing to fear—this is what I wanted opportunity to tell you—you have nothing to fear from me."

There was a degree of astuteness in this, the subtle effort to contrive a signature to their bargain. But it was not clever enough for Anna. With all her instincts alive to the suspiciousness of his actions, she saw in this move an attempt to ensure his own security for the needs of his purpose.

Her mind had been made up; but here in an instant it was all unmade.

"Is that a bargain?" she asked, quietly.

Never dreaming her as clever as this, he fell, without effort to save himself, into the trap she laid. With no concealment of his eagerness, he held out his hand.

"A firm bargain," said he.

"And what do you gain out of it, monsieur?"

His hand, held out, slowly dropped untouched to his side as he read the meaning in her eyes.

"What should I gain?" he muttered. "It is—all on your side."

"Am I to suppose you are eager to protect me now?" she demanded.

"Why—yes—madame."

"Am I to forget all the business negotiations with my father in Belgium, the German workmen, the gun-emplacements, the treatment of your soldiers to our people—am I to forget all these? And other things that happened, monsieur—am I to forget everything? In a few years have you become an honest business man who needs a false name and a power over an unprotected woman to prove his honesty?"

If there were any answer to this, he could not find it. In silence he let her turn away from him and watched her walking in the direction of the house. By the belt of nut-trees she stopped and looked back.

"For the sake of my happiness," she said, "as you rightly guessed, I had decided to tell my husband nothing. But you have opened my eyes. Do you think I can stand by and allow you to deceive my husband as you did my father? Happiness weighs a great deal, monsieur—but you have put a weightier matter in the balance now. If my wisdom, as you call it, is real, then it cannot be bought."

The moment she turned that belt of nut-trees Anna ran as fast as her feet would carry her to the house. She found Ingledew reading his paper while he waited for the breakfast gong.

In that state of her mind there was no moment for waiting, no choice of place, no consideration for words. The story she had told them the night before was true. It was true of herself. *She* was the Belgian girl. He must think what he wished, but there was no moment to be wasted, for this M. Barradell—he was no Belgian, but that same officer in the Prussian army. History was repeating itself—that was all he must see then. What they had done to her father they were about to do to him; what they had done to Belgium and France they were already preparing again to do to England now. She was not thinking of herself. That must come later. In time she would tell him all. He must not judge of her then. What mattered was his honour; what mattered was to choke the life out of this intrigue and warn the country of what it might expect.

"What matters," he said, without looking in her eyes, "what matters is what can be done with this," and, without another word to her, he seized a hunting-crop from its peg in the hall and strode out into the garden.

How long was he gone? She could not count. The breakfast grew cold as she sat up in the nursery with her baby waiting for his return.

And what would he say to her when he came back? Would it destroy the closeness of that bond between them? Would he ever regard her in that wonderful light of idealism now?

Having once told him, a kind of apathy settled over her mind. She became almost childish in her thoughts and began playing with her baby's toes.

"This little pig went to market," and that seemed to bear it in upon her consciousness most of all. All their happiness had gone to market. Was it to be sold? The tears suddenly flooded in her eyes and she broke into a storm of weeping. She was past knowing, past arguing the matter out. Often through that night she had prayed. She could pray no longer. Fate seemed to have the matter in hand now, and no appeal of hers to an unseen mercy could alter what was to be.

More than an hour later Ingledew returned. He hung up his hunting-crop, and then asked the servant for his wife.

"She's up in the nursery, sir."

"Had breakfast?"

"No, sir."

"Been in the nursery ever since I went out?"

"Yes, sir."

He took the stairs two and three at a time. And there she was, still playing with her baby's toes.

He came across the room—the fate she was waiting for. He knelt down by the cot.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

She told him the bare truth. Taking her baby's toe, she shook it in her fingers and repeated the line of the nursery rhyme.

He knew her well enough to realize all which that going to market implied, and, taking the toe next to it and shaking it in the approved-of fashion, he finished the business for her:—

"And this little pig," said he, "stayed at home."

The GIRLS 1918

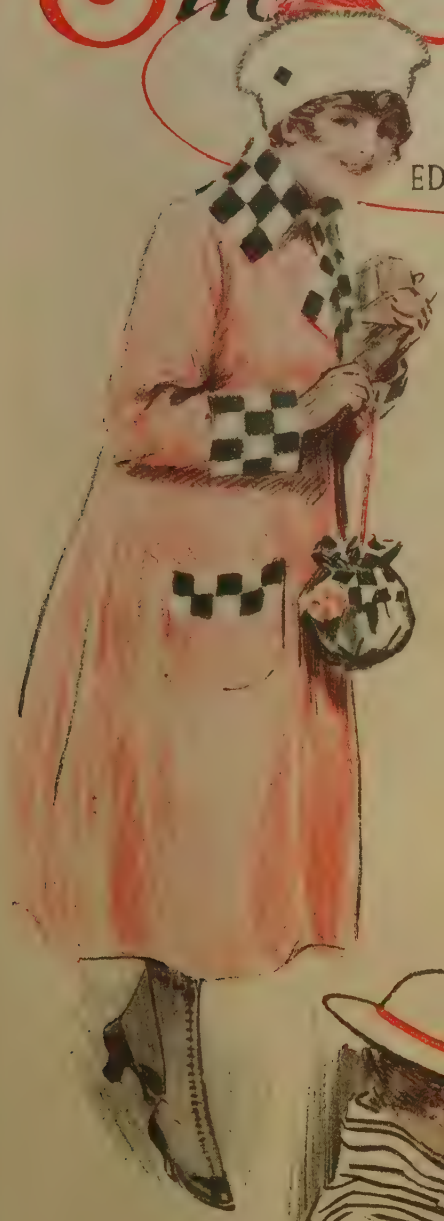
after

EDGAR ALLAN POE

by

G·H·POWELL

Illustrated by E.F.Sherie.



See the hosts of happy girls,
Pretty girls,
Brides for Admirals, Lieutenants, Viscounts, Bishops,
Dukes, or Earls.
How they crowd the city street,
Fairy flapper,
Brisk and dapper,
Figures trim and faces sweet.
How they prattle, prattle, prattle!
To their various confidantes,
Lovers, cousins, uncles, aunts,
How they smile!
Full of lively tittle-tattle
(Mischief-making kittle cattle)!
Full of fun and gleeful guile,
Maidens happier than kings,
Over London's dull existence what a light their
presence flings!
See the radiant troops of girls,
Hear the girls, girls, girls, girls,
Girls, girls, girls.
Hear the prattle and the tattle of the girls!

Mark the silence of the girls,
Business girls,
Counting coin, inditing letters, cashing cheques, or matching pearls!
Seated at their desks in rows
Mark their sweet, subconscious pose
As they seem to catch the eye,
Ask some question, "How?" or "Why?"
"Wrong?" or "Right?"
Of the portly, proud, paternal manager in waistcoat white,
Or some clerk whose manner shy,
Gestures sly,
Yet polite,
Indicate a strong emotion and a half-suppressed delight
In the girls, girls, girls, girls,
Girls, girls, girls,
In the silence or the questions of the girls, girls, girls,
In the presence and the pleasure of the girls.

See the troops of nursing-girls,
Tender girls.
What a desperate defiance all their faith and courage hurls
At the devils of Despair,
As they rally here and there,
At the devils blue that follow in the train
Of disease,
Of the martyrdom, the patience, and the pain.
How they cheer each battered hero
(Soul depressed and hopes at zero),
Till the wounded sufferer sees
Bowers of Eden ope before him,
Dreams that angel-guardians bore him,
Angel-girls,
To restore him,
With their voice and touch as soothing as the summer brook that purls,
With the charm and self-devotion of the girls,
Of the girls, girls, girls,
Girls, girls,
With the constancy and courage of the girls.

See the suffrage-getting girls,
Voting girls.
What a world of controversy in the torrent roars and swirls!
How they hurry to the poll,
Free from masculine control,
Till, at last,
Doing ample, ample penance for the long disgraceful past,
Tyrant man surrendering furls
His proud flag, and simply curls
Up defenceless, never, never more to dare
Competition anywhere,
With the girls, girls, girls, girls,
Girls, girls, girls,
With such fervid politicians as the girls.

DIRTY WORK

BY

W. W. JACOBS

Illustrated by Will Owen.

IT was nearly high-water, and the night-watchman, who had stepped aboard a lighter lying alongside the wharf to smoke a pipe, sat with half-closed eyes enjoying the summer evening. The bustle of the day was over, the wharves were deserted, and hardly a craft moved on the river. Perfumed clouds of shag, hovering for a time over the lighter, floated lazily towards the Surrey shore.

"There's one thing about my job," said the night-watchman, slowly, "it's done all alone by yourself. There's no foreman a-hollering at you and offering you a penny for your thoughts, and no mates to run into you from behind with a loaded truck and then ask you why you didn't look where you're going to. From six o'clock in the evening to six o'clock next morning I'm my own master."

He rammed down the tobacco with an experienced forefinger and puffed contentedly.

People like you 'ud find it lonely (he continued, after a pause); I did at fust. I used to let people come and sit 'ere with me of an evening talking, but I got tired of it arter a time, and when one chap fell overboard while 'e was showing me 'ow he put his wife's mother in 'er place, I gave it up altogether. There was three foot o' mud in the dock at the time, and arter I 'ad got 'im out, he fainted in my arms.

Arter that I kept myself to myself. Say wot you like, a man's best friend is 'imself. There's nobody else'll do as much for 'im, or let 'im off easier when he makes a mistake. If I felt a bit lonely I used to open the wicket in the gate and sit there watching the road, and p'r'aps pass a word or two with the policeman. Then something 'appened one night that made me take quite a dislike to it for a time.

I was sitting there with my feet outside, smoking a quiet pipe, when I 'eard a bit of a noise in the distance. Then I 'eard people running and shouts of "Stop thief!" A man came along round the corner full pelt and, just as I got up, dashed through the wicket and ran on to the wharf. I was arter 'im like a shot and got up to 'im just in time to see him throw something into the dock. And at the same moment I 'eard the other people run past the gate.

"Wot's up?" I ses, collaring 'im.

"Nothing," he ses, breathing 'ard and struggling. "Let me go."

He was a little wisp of a man, and I shook 'im like a dog shakes a rat. I remembered my own pocket being picked, and I nearly shook the breath out of 'im.

"And now I'm going to give you in charge," I ses, pushing 'im along towards the gate.

"Wot for?" he ses, purtending to be surprised.

"Stealing," I ses.

"You've made a mistake," he ses; "you can search me if you like."

"More use to search the dock," I ses. "I

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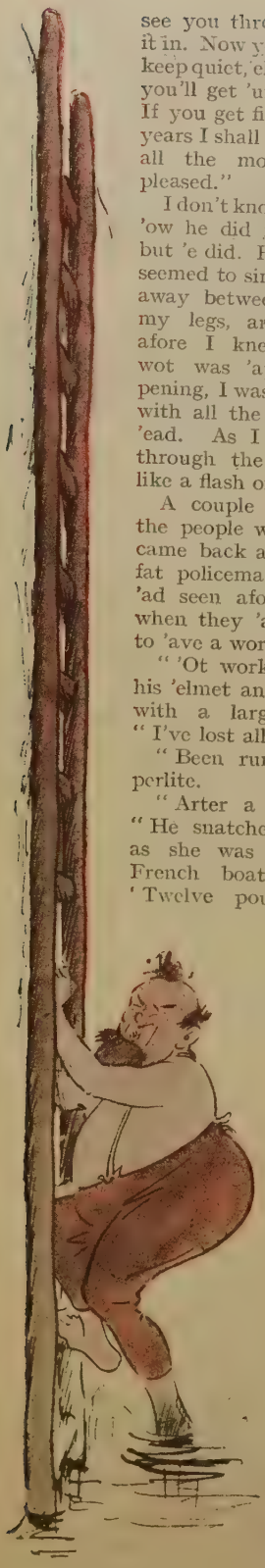


see you throw it in. Now you keep quiet, else you'll get 'urt. If you get five years I shall be all the more pleased."

I don't know 'ow he did it, but 'e did. He seemed to sink away between my legs, and afore I knew wot was 'appening, I was standing upside down with all the blood rushing to my 'ead. As I rolled over he bolted through the wicket, and was off like a flash of lightning.

"I STEPPED ROUND TO THE BULL'S HEAD."

A couple o' minutes arterwards the people wot I 'ad 'eard run past came back agin. There was a big fat policeman with 'em—a man I 'ad seen afore on the beat—and, when they 'ad gorn on, he stopped to 'ave a word with me.

"'Ot work," he ses, taking off his 'elmet and wiping his bald 'ead with a large red handkerchief. "I've lost all my puff."

"Been running?" I ses, very perlite.

"Arter a pickpocket," he ses. "He snatched a lady's purse just as she was stepping aboard the French boat with her 'usband. 'Twelve pounds in it in gold, two peppermint lozenges, and a postage stamp.'"

He shook his 'ead, and put his 'elmet on agin.

"Holding it in her little 'and as usual," he ses. "Asking for trouble, I call it. I believe if a woman 'ad one hand off and only a finger and thumb left on the other, she'd carry 'er purse in it."

He knew a'most as much about wimmen as I do. When 'is fust wife died, she said 'er only wish was that she could take 'im with her, and she made 'im promise her faithful that e'd never marry agin. His second wife, arter a long illness, passed away while he was playing hymns on the concertina to her, and 'er mother went to the doctor and said she wanted an inquest.

He went on talking for a long time, but I was busy doing a bit of 'ead-work and didn't pay much attention to 'im. I was thinking o' twelve pounds, two lozenges, and a postage stamp laying in the mud at the bottom of my dock, and arter a time 'e said 'e see as 'ow I was waiting to get back to my night's rest, and went off—stamping.

I locked the wicket when he 'ad gone away, and then I went to the edge of the dock and stood looking down at the spot where the purse 'ad been chucked in. The tide was on the ebb, but there was still a foot or two of water atop of the mud. I walked up and down, thinking.

I thought for a long time, and then I made up my mind. If I got the purse and took it to the police-station, the police would share the money out between 'em, and tell me they 'ad given it back to the lady. If I found it and put a notice in the newspaper—which would cost money—very likely a dozen or two ladies would come and see me and say it was theirs. Then if I gave it to the best-looking one and the one it belonged to turned up, there'd be trouble. My idea was to keep it—for a time—and then if the lady who lost it came to me and asked me for it I would give it to 'er.

Once I had made up my mind to do wot was right I felt quite 'appy, and arter a look up and down,

"I WENT DOWN VERY SLOW THE NEXT TIME."

"I FIXED MY EYES ON THE PLACE WHERE I THOUGHT THE PURSE WAS, AND EVERY TIME I FELT ANYTHING UNDER MY FOOT I REACHED DOWN AND PICKED IT UP."

I stepped round to the Bull's Head and 'ad a couple o' goes o' rum to keep the cold out. There was nobody in there but the landlord, and 'e started at once talking about the thief, and 'ow he 'ad run arter him in 'is shirt-sleeves.

"My opinion is," he ses, "that 'e bolted to one of the wharves and 'id 'imself. He disappeared like magic. Was that little gate o' yours open?"

"I was on the wharf," I ses, very cold.

"You might ha' been on the wharf and yet not 'ave seen anybody come on," he ses, nodding.

"Wot d'ye mean?" I ses, very sharp.

"Nothing," he ses. "Nothing."

"Are you trying to take my character away?" I ses, fixing 'im with my eye.

"Lo' bless me, no!" he ses, staring at me. "It's no good to me."

He sat down in 'is chair behind the bar and went straight off to sleep with his eyes screwed up as tight as they would go. Then 'e opened his mouth and snored till the glasses shook. I suppose I've been one of the best customers he ever 'ad, and that's the way he treated me. For two pins I'd ha' knocked 'is ugly 'ead off, but arter waking him up very suddenly by dropping my glass on the floor I went off back to the wharf.

I locked up agin, and 'ad another look at the dock. The water 'ad nearly gone and the mud was showing in patches. My mind went back to a sailorman wot had dropped 'is watch overboard two years before, and found it by walking about in the dock in 'is bare feet. He found it more easy because the glass broke when he trod on it.

The evening was a trifle chilly for June, but I've been used to roughing it all my life, especially when I was afloat, and I went into the office and began to take my clothes off. I took off everything but my pants, and I made sure o' them by making braces for 'em out of a bit of string. Then I turned the gas low and, arter slipping on my boots, went outside.

It was so cold that at fust I thought I'd give up the idea. The longer I stood on the edge looking at the mud the colder it looked, but at last I turned round and went slowly down the ladder. I waited a moment at the bottom, and was just going to step off when I remembered that I 'ad got my boots on, and I 'ad to go up agin and take 'em off.

I went down very slow the next time, and anybody who 'as been down an iron ladder with

"'ARE YOU OLD BILL?' HE SES."

"ARTER SCRAPING SOME OF THE MUD OFF WITH A BIT O' STICK, I PUT ON MY COAT, TROUSERS, AND BOOTS."

"I STOOD AND WATCHED THEM; POKING AND

thin, cold rungs, in their bare feet, will know why, and I had just dipped my left foot in, when the wharf-bell rang.

I 'oped at fust that it was a runaway-ring, but it kept on, and the longer it kept on, the worse it got. I went up that ladder agin and called out that I was coming, and then I went into the office and just slipped on my coat and trousers and went to the gate.

"Wot d'you want?" I ses, opening the wicket three or four inches and looking out at a man wot was standing there.

"Are you old Bill?" he ses.

"I'm the watchman," I ses, sharp-like. "Wot d'you want?"

"Don't bite me!" he ses, purtending to draw back. "I ain't done no 'arm. I've come round about that glass you smashed at the Bull's Head."

"Glass!" I ses, 'ardly able to speak.

"Yes, glass," he ses—"thing wot yer drink out of. The landlord says it'll cost you a tanner, and 'e wants it now in case you pass away in your sleep. He couldn't come 'imself 'cos he's got nobody to mind the bar, so 'e sent me. Why! Halloa! Where's your boots? Ain't you afraid o' ketching cold?"

"You clear off," I ses, shouting at him. "D'ye 'ear me? Clear off while you're safe, and you tell the landlord that next time 'e insults me I'll smash every glass in 'is place and then sit 'im on top of 'em! Tell 'im if 'e wants a tanner out o' me, to come round 'imself, and see wot he gets."

It was a silly thing to say, and I saw it arterwards, but I was in such a temper I 'ardly knew wot I *was* saying. I slammed the wicket in 'is face and turned the key, and then I took off my clothes and went down that ladder agin.

It seemed colder than ever, and the mud when I got fairly into it was worse than I thought it could ha' been. It stuck to me like glue, and every step I took seemed colder than the one before. 'Owever, when I make up my mind to do a thing, I do it. I fixed my eyes on the place where I thought the purse was, and every time I felt anything under my foot I reached down and picked it up—and then chucked it away as far as I could so as not to pick it up agin. Dirty job it was, too, and in five minutes I was mud up to the neck a'most. And I 'ad just got to wot I thought was the right place, and feeling about very careful, when the bell rang agin.

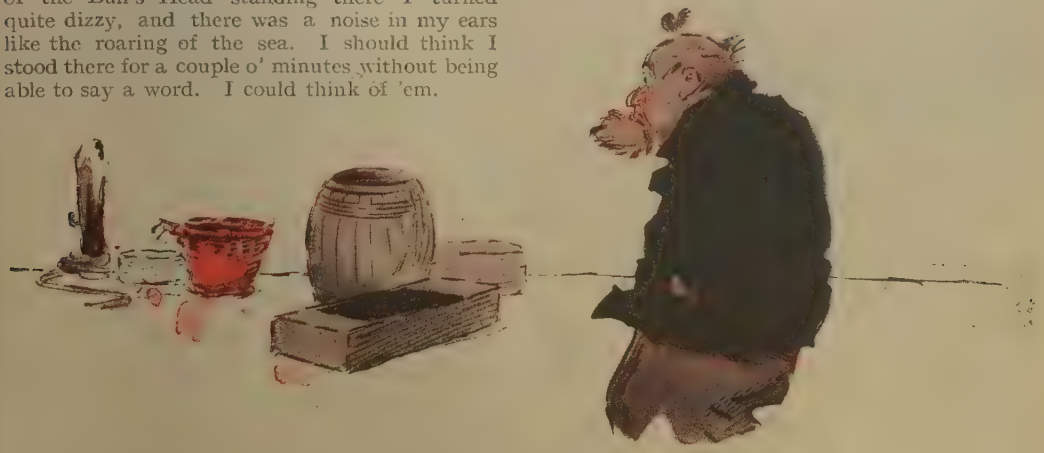
I thought I should ha' gorn out o' my mind. It was just a little tinkle at first, then another tinkle, but, as I stood there all in the dark and cold trying to make up my mind to take no notice of it, it began to ring like mad. I 'ad to go—I've known men climb over the gate afore now—and I didn't want to be caught in that dock.

The mud seemed stickier than ever, but I got out at last, and, arter scraping some of it off with a bit o' stick, I put on my coat and trousers and boots just as I was and went to the gate, with the bell going its hardest all the time.

When I opened the gate and see the landlord

"THEY BOTH STOOD THERE LOOKING

of the Bull's Head standing there I turned quite dizzy, and there was a noise in my ears like the roaring of the sea. I should think I stood there for a couple o' minutes without being able to say a word. I could think of 'em.



PRYING ABOUT THE WHARF AS IF IT BELONGED TO 'EM."

"Don't be frightened, Bill," ses the landlord, "I'm not going to eat you."

"He looks as if he's walking in 'is sleep," ses the fat policeman, wot was standing near by. "Don't startle 'im."

"He always looks like that," ses the landlord.

I stood looking at 'im. I could speak then, but I couldn't think of any words good enough; not with a policeman standing by with a notebook in 'is pocket.

"Wot was you ringing my bell for?" I ses, at last.

"Why didn't you answer it before?" ses the landlord. "D'you think I've got nothing better to do than to stand ringing your bell for three-quarters of an hour? Some people would report you."

"I know my dooty," I ses; "there's no craft up to-night, and no reason for anybody to come to my bell. If I was to open the gate every time a parcel of overgrown boys rang my bell I should 'ave enough to do."

AT ME WITH THEIR MOUTHS OPEN."

"Well, I'll overlook it this time, seeing as you're an old man and wouldn't get another sleeping-in job," he ses, looking at the policeman for him to see 'ow clever 'e was. "Wot about that tanner? That's wot I've come for."

"You be off," I ses, starting to shut the wicket. "You won't get no tanner out of me."

"All right," he ses, "I shall stand here and go on ringing the bell till you pay up, that's all."

He gave it another tug, and the policeman instead of locking 'im up for it stood there laughing.

I gave 'im the tanner. It was no use standing there arguing over a tanner, with a purse of twelve quid waiting for me in the dock, but I told 'im wot people thought of 'im.

"Arf a second, watchman," ses the policeman as I started to shut the wicket agin. "You didn't see anything of that pickpocket, did you?"

"I did not," I ses.

"'Cos this gentleman thought he might 'ave come in here," ses the policeman.

"'Ow could he 'ave come in here without me knowing it?" I ses, firing up.

"Easy," ses the landlord, "and stole your boots into the bargain."

"He might 'ave come when your back was turned," ses the policeman, "and if so, he might be 'iding there now. I wonder whether you'd mind me having a look round?"

"I tell you he ain't 'ere," I ses, very short, "but, to ease your mind, I'll 'ave a look round myself arter you've gorn."

The policeman shook his 'ead. "Well, o' course, I can't come in without your permission," he ses, with a little cough, "but I 'ave an idea, that if it was your guv'nor 'ere instead of you he'd been on'y too pleased to do anything 'e could to help the law. I'll beg his pardon to-morrow for asking you, in case he might object."

That settled it. That's the police all over, and that's 'ow they get their way and do as they like. I could see 'im in my mind's eye talking to the guv'nor, and letting out

little things about broken glasses and such-like by accident. I drew back to let 'im pass, and I was so upset that when that little rat of a landlord follered 'im I didn't say a word.

I stood and watched them poking and prying about the wharf as if it belonged to 'em, with the light from the policeman's lantern flashing about all over the place. I was shivering with cold and temper. The mud was drying on me, and I couldn't 'elp noticing the smell of it. Nobody could. And wot was worse than all was, that the tide 'ad turned and was creeping over the mud in the dock.

They got tired of it at last and came back to where I was and stood there shaking their 'eads at me.

"If he was on the wharf 'e must 'ave made his escape while you was in the Bull's Head," ses the policeman.

"He *was* in my place a long time," ses the landlord.

"Well, it's no use crying over spilt milk," ses the policeman. "Funny smell about 'ere, ain't there?" he ses, sniffing, and turning to the landlord. "Wot is it?"

"I dunno," ses the landlord. "I noticed it while we was talking to 'im at the gate. It seems to foller 'im about."

"I've smelt things I like better," ses the policeman, sniffing agin. "It's just like the foreshore when somebody 'as been stirring the mud up a bit."

"If you've finished 'unting for the pick-pocket I'll let you out and get on with my work," I ses, drawing myself up.

"Good night," ses the policeman, moving off.

"Good night, dear," ses the landlord. "Mind you tuck yourself up warm."

I lost my temper for a moment and afore I knew wot I was doing I 'ad got hold of him and was shoving 'im towards the gate as 'ard as I could shove. He pretty near got my coat off in the struggle, and next moment the policeman 'ad turned his lantern on me and they was both staring at me as if they couldn't believe their eyesight.

"He—he's turning black!" ses the landlord.

"He's turned black!" ses the policeman.

They both stood there looking at me with their mouths open, and then afore I knew wot he was up to, the policeman came close up to me and scratched my chest with his finger-nail.

"It's mud!" he ses.

"You keep your nails to yourself," I ses. "It's nothing to do with you."

"Unless it's a case of 'tempted suicide," he ses, looking at me very 'ard.

"Ah!" ses the landlord.

"There's no mud on 'is clothes," ses the policeman, looking me over with his lantern agin. "He must 'ave gone in naked, but I should like to see 'is legs to make—— All right! All right! Keep your 'air on."

"You look arter your own legs, then," I ses, very sharp, "and mind your own business."

"It is my business," he ses, turning to the landlord. "Was 'e strange in his manner at all when 'e was in your place to-night?"

"He smashed one o' my best glasses," ses the landlord.

"So he did," ses the policeman. "So he did. I'd forgot that. Do you know 'im well?"

"Not more than I can 'elp," ses the landlord. "He's been in my place a good bit, but I never knew of any reason why 'e should try and do away with 'imself. If he's been disappointed in love, he ain't told me anything about it."

I suppose that couple o' fools 'ud 'ave stood there talking about me all night if I'd ha' let 'em, but I'd had about enough of it.

"Look 'ere," I ses, "you're very clever, both of you, but you needn't worry your 'eads about me. I've just been having a mud-bath, that's all."

"A *mud-bath!*" ses both of 'em, squeaking like a couple o' silly parrots.

"For rheumatics," I ses. "I 'ad it something cruel to-night, and I thought that p'r'aps the mud 'ud do it good. I read about it in the papers. There's places where you pay pounds and pounds for 'em, but, being a pore man, I 'ad to 'ave mine on the cheap."

"'LOVE-A-DUCK!' HE SES, AT LAST. 'I WISH I'D SEEN IT.'"

The policeman stood there looking at me for a moment, and then 'e began to laugh till he couldn't stop 'imself.

"Love-a-duck!" he ses, at last, wiping his eyes. "I wish I'd seen it."

"Must ha' looked like a fat mermaid," ses the landlord, wagging his silly 'ead at me. "I can just see old Bill sitting in the mud a-combing his 'air and singing."

They 'ad some more talk o' that sort, just to

show each other 'ow funny they was, but they went off at last, and I fastened up the gate and went into the office to clean myself up as well as I could. One comfort was they 'adn't got the least idea of wot I was arter, and I 'ad

"'LOOK HERE,' I SES, 'IF YOU WANT TO BE FUNNY, GO AND BE FUNNY WITH THEM AS LIKES IT.'"

a fancy that the one as laughed last would be the one as got that twelve quid.

I was so tired that I slept nearly all day arter I 'ad got 'ome, and I 'ad no sooner got back to the wharf in the evening than I see that the landlord 'ad been busy. If there was one silly fool that asked me the best way of making mud-pies, I should think there was fifty. Little things please little minds, and the silly way some of 'em went on made me feel sorry for my sects.

By eight o'clock, 'owever, they 'ad all sheered off, and I got a broom and began to sweep up to 'elp pass the time away until low-water. O'ny one craft 'ad come up that day—a ketch called the *Peewit*—and as she was berthed at the end of the jetty she wasn't in my way at all.

Her skipper came on to the wharf just afore ten. Fat, silly old man 'e was, named Fogg. Always talking about 'is 'ealth and taking medicine to do it good. He came up to me slow like, and, when 'e stopped and asked me about the rheumatics, the broom shook in my 'and.

"Look here," I ses, "if you want to be funny, go and be funny with them as likes it. I'm fair sick of it, so I give you warning."

"Funny?" he ses, staring at me with eyes like a cow. "Wot d'ye mean? There's nothing funny about rheumatics; I ought to know; I'm a martyr to it. Did you find as 'ow the mud did you any good?"

I looked at 'im—hard, but 'e stood there looking at me with his fat baby-face, and I knew he didn't mean any 'arm; so I answered 'im perlite and wished 'im good night.

"I've 'ad pretty near everything a man can have," he ses, casting anchor on a empty box, "but I think the rheumatics was about the worst of 'em all. I even tried bees for it once."

"Bees!" I ses. "*Bees!*"

"Bee-stings," he ses. "A man told me that if I could on'y persuade a few bees to sting me, that 'ud cure me. I don't know what 'e meant by persuading; they didn't *want* no persuading. I took off my coat and shirt and went and rocked one of my neighbour's bee-hives next door, and I thought my last hour 'ad come."

He sat on that box and shivered at the memory of it.

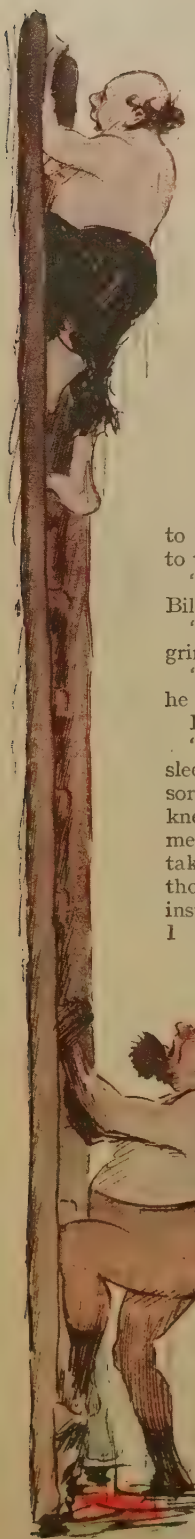
"Now I take Dr. Pepper's pellets instead," he ses. "I've got a box in my state-room, and if you'd like to try 'em you're welcome."

He sat there talking about the complaints he had 'ad and wot he 'ad done for them till I thought I should never have got rid of 'im. He got up at last, though, and, arter telling me to always wear flannel next to my skin, climbed aboard and went below.

I knew the hands was aboard, and arter watching 'is cabin-skylight until the light was out, I went and undressed. Then I crept back on to the jetty, and arter listening by the *Peewit* to make sure that they was all asleep, I went back and climbed down the ladder.

It was colder than ever. The cold seemed to get into my bones, but I made up my mind to 'ave that twelve quid if I died for it. I trod round and round the place where I 'ad seen that purse chucked in until I was tired, and the rubbish I picked up by mistake you wouldn't believe.

"MY 'ART SEEMED TO STAND STILL FOR A MOMENT."



I suppose I 'ad been in there arf an hour, and I was standing up with my teeth clenched to keep them from chattering, when I 'appened to look round and see something like a white ball coming down the ladder. My 'art seemed to stand still for a moment, and then it began to beat as though it would burst. The white thing came down lower and lower, and then all of a sudden it stood in the mud and said, "*Ow!*"

"Who is it?" I ses. "Who are you?"

"Halloa, Bill!" it ses. "Ain't it perishing cold?"

It was the voice o' Cap'n Fogg, and if ever I wanted to kill a fellow-creetur, I wanted to then.

"'Ave you been in long, Bill?" he ses.

"About ten minutes," I ses, grinding my teeth.

"Is it doing you good?" he ses.

I didn't answer 'im.

"I was just going off to sleep," he ses, "when I felt a sort of hot pain in my left knee. O' course, I knew wot it meant at once, and instead o' taking some of the pellets I thought I'd try your remedy instead. It's a bit nippy, but I don't mind that if it does me good."

He laughed a silly sort o' laugh, and then I'm blest if 'e didn't sit down in that mud and waller in it. Then he'd get up and come for'ard two or three steps and sit down agin.

"Ain't you sitting down, Bill?" he ses, arter a time.

"No," I ses, "I'm not."

"I don't think you can expect to get the full benefit unless you do," he ses, coming up close to me and sitting down agin. "It's a bit of a shock at fust, but—— Halloa!"

"HE WAS UP THAT LADDER HAND OVER FIST."

"I'M BLEST IF 'E DID'NT SIT DOWN IN THAT MUD."

"Wot's up?" I ses.

"Sitting on something hard," he ses. "I wish people 'ud be more careful."

He took a list to port and felt under the starboard side. Then he brought his 'and up and tried to wipe the mud off and see wot he 'ad got.

"Wot is it?" I ses, with a nasty sinking sort o' feeling inside me.

"I don't know," he ses, going on wiping "It's soft outside and 'ard inside. It——"

"Let's 'ave a look at it," I ses, holding out my 'and.

"It's nothing," he ses, in a queer voice, getting up and steering for the ladder. "Bit of oyster-shell, I think."

He was up that ladder hand over fist, with me close behind 'im, and as soon as he 'ad got on to the wharf started to run to 'is ship.

"Good night, Bill," he ses, over 'is shoulder.

"Arf a moment," I ses, follering 'im.

"I must get aboard," he ses; "I believe I've got a chill," and afore I could stop 'im he 'ad jumped in and run down to 'is cabin.

I stood on the jetty for a minute or two trembling all over with cold and temper. Then I saw he 'ad got a light in 'is cabin, and I crept aboard and peeped down the skylight. And I just 'ad time to see some sovereigns on the table, when he looked up and blew out the light.

RAYMOND THE CLOWN

By

MADAME MAURICE MAETERLINCK.

Illustrated by J. A. Shepherd.

I.

THE little world of dogs, though subject to the greater world of mankind, which flatters itself upon its conscience and has its dreams of justice, is peopled with unfortunates. The victims of ill-luck are legion. There is a destiny for dogs as well as for men, a destiny like our own, which laughs at goodness and beauty and all the charming promises of Nature.

The first figure that my memory evokes, after the death of Louis the Debonnaire, our dear Pomeranian, is that of a diverting and easily diverted little demon, full of sparkle, life, and laughter, given to much barking, a creature of infinite drollery. Extremely gentle and affectionate at times, he spent many a half-hour on my lap, motionless under the book or writing-pad which rested on his pleasant brown head. Sometimes he would venture to turn a great eye upon me, not unlike the eye of a sentimental frog. Do you see Raymond now? Only a French bulldog has an eye like that. This particular bulldog's name was Raymond. Why? Nobody knows. He was usually spoken of as "The Nigger Baby"; and the reason for this was obvious: the wide grimace that uncovered his white teeth; his eyes, of a dull black, unlit by any reflection; his little nose, roughly carved out of a scrap of ebony: all proclaimed it aloud. Besides, Raymond had a strange love of dress that made him absolutely human. When he was quite small and as yet unable to walk firmly on his short, bandy legs, somebody tried a baby's bonnet on him. He wore it without a sign of impatience. Next day, perceiving the bonnet in a corner, he took it in his teeth and carried it to the nurse, who readily put it on him again, for in this headgear the little bull-dog delighted everyone who saw him. Another day, someone draped him in a shawl; and, soon after, he was fully dressed. He loved it; he was a natural actor, a born clown. Disguised as a ballet-girl, jumping through a hoop, or wearing a cap on his head, with a pipe in his mouth, or frisking about in baby-clothes with a doll in his front paws, he used instinctively to stand on his hind-legs, only resuming his natural position when people ceased to notice him. Unlike his fellows, he had more vanity than greed; the presence of a number of persons acted on his nerves; he was at once here, there, and everywhere, wild with excitement, and performing a thousand tricks, which he would never have attempted in the family circle. He seemed fully to understand the flattery and applause of laughter.

What a gold-mine Raymond would have been to a travelling show!

II.

WHEN I was a little girl I used to be punished for the excessive tenderness of heart that made me scream and stamp my feet in the street whenever I saw a lost dog or a horse that was being beaten. For the same reason I was forbidden the delights of the fair and the circus;

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for, the moment a well-trained animal appeared, I would utter shrill cries at the thought of the blows which it must have endured before arriving at such a stage! In later years "The Nigger Baby" upset all my theories. Work for him was not a burden but a pleasure. He knew everything without learning anything. The first time that I held a hoop in front of him he hurled himself through it with comical eagerness, and then, turning about, once more flung himself through the circle, with his eyes starting from his head, his ears flapping, and his tongue hanging out of his mouth.

Raymond may have been the son or grandson of a performing dog. Why should not dogs, as well as men, be subject to hereditary influences? Be this as it may, his was a striking personality; and his originality was encouraged until it led to his undoing.

III.

I CAN still see the poor dog as he was on the glorious day that was to seal his fate.

It was in the country, on a holiday. The village children had been promised a performance by Raymond the ring-master. The lawn in front of our house represented the arena. Some neighbours' children had surrounded it with stakes, which were connected by a cord and surmounted with paper flags. The day was fine; the sun was shining; the happy countryside was all song and laughter. Because of a distribution of prizes which had taken place that afternoon the company was rather late in assembling. It was five o'clock when the school children, wearing their Sunday best, arrived two by two, their faces flushed beneath the green of their wreaths, a green which clashed with the tender tones of the meadows.

A big table was laid, covered with cakes, fruits, and sweets. The little girls and boys soon forgot the stiffness born of their unaccustomed clothes and the pompous wreaths upon their heads. They danced, played games, and sang; but above all they waited! They were waiting for the wonderful dog of whom the whole neighbourhood was talking.

Here he comes! Joyful, frisking with impatience, as though understanding the little triumph in store for him, he rushes to the basket, in the centre of the ring, where his toys are collected, together with his dresses and the hoops employed in his performances.

Amid laughter and applause the performance begins.

Raymond surpasses himself: by turns a clown, a gymnast, a ring-master, or an indefatigable comic baby, he amuses and astonishes his audience. His natural ardour imparts to all that he does a charming and surprising grace; but, as always when outsiders are present, a sort of frenzy possesses him. I do my best to calm him, and am

thankful when the time comes for the last trick, one that amuses him particularly. A hoop is held out to him; he hangs on to it with his powerful jaws and allows himself to be swung round and round, very quickly, till the momentum acquired extends his little body, just as though he were flying. Everybody stands amazed. But, suddenly, Raymond lets go. A cry escapes from every breast. He lies stretched on the ground panting. What can have happened? He has not fallen from any height; and the soft, springy lawn must have broken the little black demon's fall. I run across to him, feel him all over, move his legs one after the other; he does not groan or whimper; there are no bones broken. The onlookers are reassured; it can only be an attack of dizziness; there is no cause for alarm.

IV.

Alas! From that day poor Raymond was never the same again. He had lost his sprightly ways; he would drag himself painfully along the walks in the garden; and the moment he attempted to run he checked himself suddenly, as though held back by some malign force.

How far away were all his delights! When he caught sight of his basket he would go up to it and seemed to sniff regretfully at his ball, his trapeze, and his pretty costumes. He no longer cared to be dressed up; he was happiest in my arms; and I used to rock him to and fro, while his great, loving eyes besought me to rid him of his evil spell.

Dogs cannot understand the helplessness of their gods, who are unable to give them relief; and, if their little minds were capable of receiving a gleam of light, they would cease to attribute to us a power which is only built up of their own servility.

Directly we returned to Paris I took Raymond to a veterinary surgeon. He had a lesion of the heart. Every attempt would be made to save him. I had to deceive his fond affection in order to leave him in a stranger's hands.

Next day I was told of the grief which he had displayed. But it was essential that he should be kept under observation. I went to see him. After I had called twice, his physician asked me not to come any more. The little creature felt too much joy at seeing me, too much sorrow at parting from me; his malady was aggravated by each visit.

Soon I heard that he was refusing his food and that there was nothing for it but to give him a dose that would set him free. They wanted to apply a little test, in order to measure his failing forces, and asked me to send him one of my frocks. The moment he smelt the stuff on which he had so often fallen asleep, Raymond rose all quivering, wagged his tail, wrinkled his little nose, and fell, never again to rise, amid the soft, familiar folds.

A Matter for Boccaccio

by Roland Pertwee

Illustrated by A. Ferrier.

YOU cannot, with impunity, allow a child of two years to luxuriate with a stick of chocolate and, on the following day, possibly at the dictates of the Food Controller, refuse a repetition of the issue.

The child will not follow your reasoning, will not appreciate why so rapturous a delicacy should be denied. He will stretch out his palms and yell for more—he will bite his fists and lie face downwards upon the floor. Later, lamentation proving fruitless, he will seek alternatives and likely enough be apprehended eating coal in some secret place.

Any concern so gigantic and revolutionary as the present war must inevitably result in modifications or elaborations of our moral outlook.

It is a great deal to expect the human race to put away all thought of happiness at the first throb of the drum which calls the world to arms, and yet with an adaptability passing belief the great majority has contrived to do so. Happiness, as it were, has been laid in lavender and locked in the dower chest, and in its stead the billion little people have wrapped themselves in the solemn garments of mourning and anxiety. By the multitude the impossible has been achieved; but there still remains the minority—the sweet, thoughtless, adorable minority—who cannot see, who cannot grasp—who plead for their measure of happiness with outstretched hands that cannot be denied.

Of the latter order was Sheila Sorel, whose mind was the mind of a baby. She knew she was pretty and was glad. She played at making pretty faces before a mirror, as a child will do. If she bit the strings of her sun-bonnet it was because as a child in the same mood she would have bitten her thumbs. If she sang with joy when the sun was out or gasped with delight when the sea splashed her bathing body with impertinent wavelets, it was for the same reason. At nineteen she was as much a child as at ten, with all a child's insatiable and sensuous desire for happiness.

This being the case, it is impossible to find excuses for her parents, who, in the early part of 1914, fell victims to bronchitis and departed hand-in-hand to the region of spirits.

They had been such a very contented little trio—never missing an opportunity for making life happier for each other and themselves—and then, without a word of warning, down went the flag to half-mast and nothing remained to Sheila but an agonized heart, an empty house, and a full banking account.

As she had no idea what to do with any of these legacies she repaired to a residential hotel at Bournemouth, and lonelily walked abroad in search of the happiness she had lost.

Fate has a knack of heaping tragedy upon tragedy, for just when Sheila was beginning to feel her sorrows were abating, the Nations thought fit to declare war one against the other.

Sheila did not in the least comprehend war; she regarded it as an affair of newspapers; but in common with the rest of humanity she felt the weight of that cold hand which stole chillingly about the national heart in the autumn of '14.

Hitherto Sheila had thought but little of man, but now he assumed a different aspect—a strange, heroic importance.

With half-understanding she knew that misery and disquietude were abroad. And since there were no warm and motherly arms into which she could creep for forgetful sanctuary, she watched it all in a kind of wistful stupor. But after a while a sense of injustice stole over her. She felt the war was using her harshly. She had no real association with it and yet it obtruded itself glocmily into her private life.

There were deep wells of sympathy in the soul of Sheila Sorel, and for want of a better subject on whom to lavish their waters she lavished them upon herself, thereby provoking a considerable degree of personal distress. She would wander lonelily in the lawned gardens of the hotel, and blink with sad moist eyes at the sea. From time to time, as the mood dictated, she indulged in a few quiet and reflective tears.

Some women are not at their best a-weeping, but tears became Sheila extraordinarily well. With the salt drops coursing down her round and rosy cheeks she presented a picture calculated to awaken the gentlest emotions in the heart of man. This, at least, was the opinion

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"LITERALLY AND METAPHORICALLY HE CAME INTO HER PRESENCE ON ALL FOURS."

of the Hon. Leslie Whittaker, second lieutenant in the Royal Seabright Highland Regiment.

This young and enthusiastic officer was sprawling on the grass beneath a lilac bush, endeavouring to better his acquaintance with the Manual of Military Law. He had that day, contrary to the advice of the sergeant-major, framed a charge against a certain accused private on lines which knew no precedent. His company commander thereat took occasion to reprimand the light-hearted Leslie and urged him to abandon frivolous literature in favour of sterner study.

For a while Leslie floundered courageously with rules of procedure, and was so greatly confused that he was fain to lay the book aside and allow his eyes to wander. In so doing they fell upon Sheila, visible through a rift in the lilacs.

Sheila was alone. She sat upon her heels and her eyes were wet. Her hands plucked aimlessly at the budding daisies and her breath came jerkily in a manner provoking sympathy and regard.

The chivalry of the Whittakers sprang instantly to life, and, forgetting his studies, the Hon. Leslie crawled through the screen of twigs and branches towards her.

Literally and metaphorically he came into her presence on all fours.

"I say, you know," he said, without preamble, "you look most awfully miserable, you know."

To which Sheila replied, "I am, but I didn't know anyone could see me."

"It's awful cheek to have looked, but I simply couldn't help myself. I do hope you don't mind."

"No," said Sheila, after a pause in which she saw that Leslie was a very nice young man. "I don't mind a bit, because it isn't any good being miserable all by oneself."

"It isn't any good being miserable at all," announced Leslie, very profoundly. "I know that because I happen to be a bit down myself to-day."

Sheila's reply proves that her sympathies were easily turned from herself.

"Are you? Why?"

"Got into hot water with the powers that be. My company commander slanged me up hill and down dale. Rotten it was!"

"What a shame," said Sheila. "Did you tell him he was beastly?"

"One can't, you know. There's a book I've just been reading over there on the grass which tells you so. Dry stuff, too. So it all comes back on oneself. That's what makes one feel a bit down, y'know."

"But it's the same with me," said Sheila. "It all comes back on oneself."

"It's pretty good cheek, but I wish you'd tell me what you're bothered about. You *did* look as if you were crying."

"I had had a little cry," admitted Sheila, "but it was only a little one. If you hadn't spoken when you did it might have been bigger."

"But what made you?"

Sheila shook her head.

"I don't know. Everything's so sad. It's the war. People say it will go on for simply ages and things will get unhappier and unhappier. I don't want to be unhappy—it's horrid to be. I would like to be very, very happy indeed, and jolly, and laugh about silly things that are fun—but you see one can't and—and—well, that's why I was crying, I suppose."

The Hon. Leslie Whittaker was not afflicted with an analytic mind, and to him the reasons she had given seemed very just and reasonable. For the first time he felt the war was a serious affair and its effects grievous and far-reaching. Synchronous with this thought came to him a sense of overwhelming loneliness. He saw the world as a barren moor through which he was destined to pass in isolation. A single ray of

hope existed to lift him from this path of sorrow, and that was to find someone equally affected as himself in whom to confide. It was therefore with the warmest impulse he possessed himself of her small, daisy-plucking hand and pressed it in silent understanding. This accomplished, he felt relieved, if a shade bashful, and to establish a firmer foundation upon which their friendship might be built, he told her his ancient name and the regiment of Highlanders to whose service he wore a Sam Browne belt.

"I know who you are," he wound up, very untruthfully, "but I should like to hear you say it, all the same."

"Sheila Sorel."

"It's the finest girl's name in the world, and it suits you tremendously," he said. "I don't know if you've got any people, but I should awfully like to call."

"I haven't," said Sheila. "They died last year. I forgot to tell you when I was showing how sad I was."

"Then you're all on your own here?"

She nodded.

"That's funny, for so am I. But, I say, it must be tremendously rotten for you. They are awful stiffs at this hotel."

Again she nodded and he continued:—

"I've no people either, you know. It's pretty extraordinary when you come to think of it! I've a few cousins and an aunt or two, of course, but they don't count, do they?"

"No."

The Hon. Leslie rested his chin on his knees and his eyes drowsed across the sea.

"A chap gets most fearfully lonely," he said. "Don't know why it is, but somehow he longs to be understood. No one ever understood me."

"Nor me," said Sheila. "I've never been understood."

A mighty craving to be understood overcame them both. They did not know what particularly complex qualities they possessed which demanded understanding, but the need was immediate and paramount.

"I can tell you," said Leslie, "I've done some pretty hard thinking about it, but it leads nowhere."

In this respect his words were true, but they awakened an instant response in the heart of Sheila.

Loneliness of all the moods is the most stimulating to the emotions. It is safe to hazard that any two young people of opposite sex, who persuade each other they are lonely, will embrace before many hours have passed.

Sheila had no experience of being in anyone's arms, save only her father's and mother's, but curious persuasive thrills and impulses of nature were already at work, and subconsciously she yielded to the idea that the embrace which was not of blood relationship would prove more worth having. As a wholly natural being she did not consider there was any occasion for caprice or delay in the matter. Here was a perfectly sweet young man who, like herself, desired gaiety and had found it not—who was lonely, despondent, and wishful of being understood. The conclusion was obvious.

And so in the silence she laid her hand in his as token of good fellowship.

"By Jove," sighed the Hon. Leslie, "I don't know why, but I believe we could understand each other."

At this juncture in the proceedings an old gentleman elected to have his Bath-chair wheeled to a position beside them, and seemed to imagine his gloomy and foreboding conversation would

"AT THIS JUNCTURE IN THE PROCEEDINGS AN OLD GENTLEMAN ELECTED TO HAVE HIS BATH-CHAIR WHEELED TO A POSITION BESIDE THEM."

"SHEILA WENT UP BY THE LIFT, AND LESLIE, DISTRAUGHT BY HER ABSENCE, RUSHED UP THE STAIRS."

prove an agreeable diet. In this he was at fault, for so soon as courtesy admitted the young people fled the spot and left him in unchallenged ownership.

That same evening they met again, and by mutual consent directed their steps toward the pine-clad solitudes which lie to the left of the town. Here they seated themselves on the carpet of pine needles, with their backs against a single sticky old trunk.

And because love had entered their hearts the moon came out, dabbling the sea with her white mysteries, an odorous wind sang lovely songs in the tracery of branches overhead, and the waves crooned and cuddled the shifting shingle on the beach below.

"It's all tremendously wonderful," said Leslie (who felt the poets weren't such silly asses after all). "I feel as if I were really understood at last."

"And so do I—nearly," whispered Sheila.

A moment later she withdrew the modification, for the Hon. Leslie, nothing if not a trier, had spent the small patch of time intervening in embracing her with sudden and ecstatic fervour.

If in imagination Sheila had thought it might be pleasant to find herself in a man's arms, she had no real conception of how amazingly delicious it was in practice. With the acute wonder of it she closed her long-lashed eye-lids and gasped.

The Hon. Leslie gasped, too, and realizing the best cure for gasping would be to repeat the experiment, he took her to his heart again.

Great is the knowledge to be had through the medium of kisses. Only afterwards can one be sure if one desires to kiss again. Not infrequently the deed once accomplished provokes an immediate distaste and a matter for self-reproach. This, however, was not the case with Sheila or Leslie. They found in each other's arms intolerable delight—delight too vivid for words.

When at length they returned to the brightly-lit foyer of the hotel their faces were radiant and their eyes afire.

Sheila went up by the lift, and Leslie, distraught by her absence, rushed up the stairs three at a time for the rapture of clasping her once more before they parted for the night.

"When—when'll you marry me?" he implored.

"Oh, soon, please," said Sheila.

Which goes to prove they were very young and very enthusiastic.

It was a military wedding and it took place fourteen days after their first meeting. They both felt the engagement was a long one, but Leslie's military duties and Sheila's shopping helped the interminable hours to pass.

After the ceremony there was a reception—such a reception. A mighty and many-tiered cake was hewn by a sword in the hands of Sheila. The air was full of congratulation, of laughter, and the popping of corks. Everywhere were smiling faces, handshakes, and good cheer.

Then came the time when Sheila ran upstairs and changed into a peach of a motoring frock, and ran downstairs into the arms of her husband and the press of friends. And together they dropped their heads and made a bolt through the rice and confetti to where the white touring car stood humming at the kerb.

It was a heavenly hotel in South Devon at which they arrived. They felt very shy indeed as they unpacked their suit-cases and laid their evening apparel out, and for that reason Leslie gathered unto himself many clothes and repaired therewith to the bathroom, where he indulged in a bath of such prodigious length that Sheila was dressed and downstairs when his timid knock sounded at the door.

They dined together at a little table over-

looking a trout stream which laughed down to the sea. They wondered if anyone guessed they were newly-wed—which everyone most certainly did. They looked at each other with the shyest delight and talked with the greatest difficulty.

And Leslie spoiled her beautiful satin shoes with the caressing soles of his brown boots, and Sheila esteemed that it was good to have them spoiled in so glorious a manner.

Afterward they stole out beneath the trees and along the cliffs, and Leslie declared of all his inanimate possessions he best adored the luminous-dialed gold wrist-watch she had given him. Indeed, he seemed unable to remove his eyes from the slow-moving hands of this pretty trinket, and Sheila herself showed a greater regard for it than hitherto.

And at last the stars came out and the moon rose, and night took charge of their world. By tacit consent they repeated the circular walk they had made, since to do so gave genuinity to expressions of fatigue which had begun to arise in their conversation. And when they came to the farthest point of the circle and knew they had begun to return, his arm tightened about her and she nestled closer to his side. The latch of the wicket-gate clicked as they passed through—the gravel crunched softly beneath their feet. Faintly shone the lights on either side, for, as they had both said scores and scores of times, "it was all so wonderful."

The wonder endured throughout and beyond those all too fleet-footed days of honeymoon. Leslie had taken a little house for Sheila upon the cliffs, and thither, at the conclusion of each day's work, he repaired with perilous dispatch upon a motor-cycle.

To Sheila the rapture of being mistress of the House of Whittaker was, if anything, a greater delight than the love-packed days of honeymoon.

They decided that the war was all that could be desired, and there was no occasion to regard it otherwise.

Maybe the war was offended at being esteemed so lightly, and to emphasize its importance decreed that the Royal Seabright Highlanders would be better employed in the East than in Bournemouth.

The Hon. Leslie looked somewhat dazed when he conveyed these tidings to his wife, and she cried very heartily, and they clung together with pitiful earnest, and in so doing forgot a great deal of their sorrows, as mercifully happens with those who love.

Leslie gave his photograph to Sheila and Sheila gave hers to Leslie—and on his he wrote "To my darling Pottles," and on hers she wrote "To my sweetest Pottles," for after the manner of many lovers they knew each other by a single name.

"THEY MADE A BOLT THROUGH THE RICE AND CONFETTI TO WHERE THE WHITE TOURING CAR STOOD HUMMING AT THE KERB."

And on a certain night they held each other very close and spoke no word, while the grey seas throbbed upon the beach, the wind moaned, and the rain clucked like laughter in the gutters of the roof.

Amidst the shouting of many commands, and the shriek and whistle of locomotives, the Hon. Leslie clasped his wife for the last time.

They both cried and thanked God for that great mercy. A little farther up the platform that hard and cruel man, the company commander, was blubbering on the shoulders of a plain little woman. Even the colonel looked none too sure of himself, and many others were hiding behind newspapers. The war has taught us the honesty of tears.

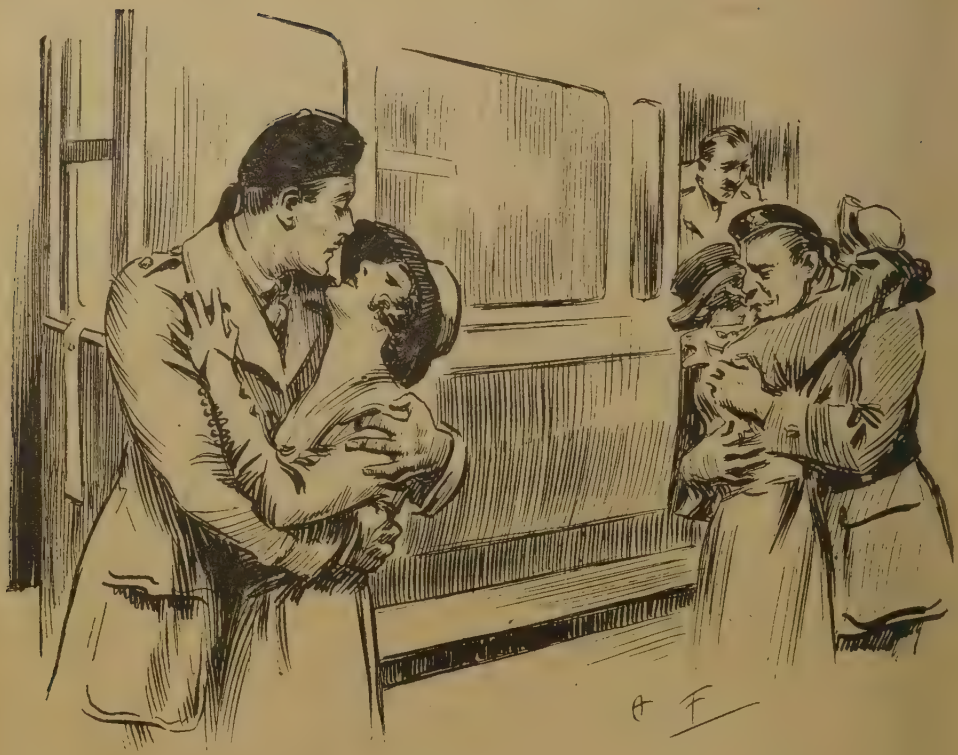
Leslie choked: "Oh, God—darling!"

And Sheila: "Don—don—don't!"

But the inexorable green flag had fallen and the train began to move.

of the masked windows and they looked aloft to where their own beckoned in the darkness.

And at breakfast next morning Sheila's face was aglow with a beauty so new and wonderful that Leslie (incidentally the other guests were of early habit and already abroad) seized her hands and drew her towards him. And in so doing he spilt a cup of coffee all over the pretty frock. So Sheila ran upstairs to change and he ran after her to help and succeeded in hindering a very great deal, but there were no reproaches



"THE HON. LESLIE CLASPED HIS WIFE FOR THE LAST TIME."

A moment later he had gone and Sheila, with an emptiness of heart which knew no bounds, hurried from the station yard—alone.

The child had eaten the chocolate of happiness and now the issue was to be denied.

From the intensity of her joy Sheila relapsed into a quagmire of loneliness and misery. The few girl friends she possessed were too occupied with their own anxieties to vex themselves with hers, and so the full weight of her sorrow rested upon herself.

In the lonely double bed which seemed to emphasize her aloneness Sheila clasped her hands and wondered why she of all the world should be so sorely tried. That battered phrase "the exigencies of the campaign" offered no solution to the riddle, nor any redress.

The Hon. Leslie, as may be imagined, was no great hand at writing letters. He wrote, it is true, and with praiseworthy frequency, but he had no skill in the art and did not possess the power of conveying a sense of his personality to the written page.

Sheila yearned for and missed him intolerably, and the yearning increased as the weeks and months stole by.

From first to last they had known each other but a little over six weeks, and during that time had been so close together that neither he nor she had obtained a very fair perspective of each other.

At the end of a year's absence he had lost for her his individuality as a man and had become a confused but glorious memory—the inspiration of the wonder-patch in her small life.

From this circumstance there arises a nice but hazardous point for argument. Are our affections inspired by a personality or by the effect he or she produces? If by the latter then will not another, capable of reproducing the same effect, serve our affections as well?

Sheila did not pretend to propound or to solve this theory, but the fact remains that at this time it was the joy she pleaded for and not the man. The man had given the joy—but the joy was more vivid than the man. Thus when Sheila cried for Leslie to be restored to her, it was actually her own departed joy for which she beseeched.

But Leslie showed no sign of returning. The sounds of the desert were about him, and leave warrants are not showered upon healthy warriors in the East.

Not least of the tragedies of war is the throttling of love for which it must be held to account. It is unreasonable to suppose anyone as light-hearted as Sheila would be able indefinitely to bear her grief without confession. And, since confessions of loveless lonesomeness are not always sympathetically received by members of an even sex, it is entirely natural she should have unburdened herself to a man. In extenuation it should be remembered that her grass-widowhood was at this time deeply involved in

the second year of its reign. It should further be remembered and emphasized that under normal circumstances she and her husband would scarcely have arrived at a Christian name intimacy in the six crazy weeks they had known each other. Neither should it be forgotten that in this small space of time they had made a better acquaintance with rapture and love than with psychology (that domestic science which we are everywhere assured proves so valuable a guide to married and unmarried folk). And, finally, it should be placed to the credit of her innocent intents that she should have chosen a man so disastrous to the morals as Geoffrey Stayton in whom to confide.

There is a popular tradition, spread doubtless by authors of fiction, that the man who unlawfully takes unto himself another's wife is a pronounced villain. In print he is recognizable at once, by the seduction of his manner, the suavity of his address, and the finish of his sentences. At a glance the reader is aware that he is in the presence of a man who will exploit sin. From the writer's point of view this is a most simple and satisfactory type, but, alas! the seducer in real life is of no such pattern. (Were he so it would be easy for moral vigilants to detail someone to walk before him with a red flag that maidens might know and beware.) He has no distinguishing characteristics to show that he preys upon human frailty. He is as the rest of us are—in short, he is one of the best fellows going. We all know and like him; we extend toward him the hand of friendship and our hearts thrill with joy at his honest clasp. He has but a single fault and that is not of his own seeking, nor is it apparent to the eye. He is too sympathetic—he feels too acutely the sorrows of others, and in his efforts to better them he loses sight of considerations no less important.

As a man Geoffrey Stayton was all that could be desired. Chivalrous, clumsy, and kind beyond belief; to his mother he showed unfailing solicitude; he seldom, if ever, stayed out at night, and his religious convictions were sound and orthodox. He had the gentlest manners, and because he was shy he stammered when conversing with strangers. To his friends he was known as "dear old Geoff," and they were perfectly right. The medical officers before whom he paraded in the days when he yearned for foreign service shook their heads and would not let him go. They diagnosed he was troubled with a weak heart, and they were right, too.

Wherefore Geoffrey, in the armour of war, unstained by any battlefield, walked abroad, or rather at home, with the pathetic air of a misunderstood man.

In the course of one of these walks he was introduced to Sheila and they found much in common.

At the very outset she was drawn toward him on account of his stammer, which seemed a sure sign of a timid but kindly disposition. His disability left her most of the talking to do, and after a very little while she was giving him a touching account of her woes.

"S-s-s-seems awfully s-s-sad; and you n-no m-m-m-more than a g-girl," he said.

His next remark was, "If only I c-c-could d-do something."

But Sheila shook her head, which he found a great incentive to action.

Their intimacy grew apace, and as the days went by they became great friends. Their sympathy for one another was boundless. Always, and with the kindest intention, Geoffrey spoke of Leslie, but, try as he would, he could not entirely convince himself of this absent young man's worthiness to such a bride. He saw very clearly that none but himself was really capable of giving her the happiness she deserved. Of this, however, he breathed no word, his chivalry being too great. At night he would lie awake and vex his soul with the misery of her lot. Perhaps in the darkness he may have breathed a prayer or two, for he was very devout.

Really nothing could have exceeded the discretion of his emotions toward Sheila, unless it were hers toward him. They were friends and no more. Nature, not they, must be blamed if their friendship moved a pace or two in the direction of passion.

It became a habit with them to walk a while under the stars o' nights, when they would talk great foolishness in very great earnest. "Dear old Geoff" would leave her by the iron gate of her small abode; he would then smile, a little sadly perhaps and walk broodingly down the hill.

But one night a great madness seized him, and instead of shaking hands like the nicely-brought-up little gentleman he undoubtedly was, he put in a breathless requisition for a kiss.

Sheila ran into the house and shut the door with alarming precipitation, but in the dark of the little hall she found herself breathing with greater difficulty than the short run merited. And because she remembered she had breathed like that when first she found herself in the arms of Leslie, she wondered what unknown forces were driving her to do so now. It was the same—but not the same. She felt that happiness was at hand—but out of reach.

Lying on the mat was a letter from Leslie. He wrote that all things considered "he wasn't having such a bad time."

Only during the first three months of his service abroad does a man write of the abject misery he feels. Afterwards he becomes a shade more considerate to his reader and goes to the opposite extreme. Often he does this when his heart is heavy within him—and often makes a great mistake by so doing.

In her mood at the moment of reading Sheila could not but feel the letter was callous and cruel. It argued that he missed her not and was enjoying himself immensely.

Sheila had not had a good cry for a long time, but then and there she indulged in an extra big one which lasted for one hour and twenty-

five minutes. When it was over she stared at Leslie's photograph and tried to revive her old impressions of him. Unfortunately, the effort was a failure. He wore a silly expression in the photograph not in the least suggesting the good times they had spent together.

Sheila went to bed in great perplexity. She passed a troubled night and woke next day with a headache.

Geoffrey called about eleven o'clock, complete with a chain of contrite protestations, hall-marked in every link. Learning from the maid the news of her mistress's indisposition he became well-nigh distraught. He rushed to a chemist for vast quantities of aspirin tabloids, toilet vinegar, and eau-de-Cologne, and at a florist and fruiterer's he bought sufficient flowers and grapes to furnish the table for a mayoral banquet.

These he delivered in person and subsequently called three times during the afternoon for the latest bulletins.

Sheila made a miraculous recovery, and that evening they walked upon the cliffs, where Geoffrey, after offering thanks to the proper quarter for her deliverance, poured a cascade of self-reproaches into her coral ear.

To reduce two hours' intensive conversation to its basic elements, we find nothing more startling arises than a varying paraphrase of the ensuing sentences.

"I'm an absolute brute and rotter."

"You shouldn't have asked me. I know you couldn't help it—but you shouldn't."

"I ought to be shot—shot!"

But when at last they came to the garden gate he hovered and she stayed.

He said "good night," and she said "good night," but still she stayed.

And all of a sudden he found that what he had asked for as a gift he now was taking by violence.

"SHEILA SAID 'NO—NO,' AND TURNED HER HEAD."

Sheila said "No—no," and turned her head. The kiss fell upon her pretty hair.

And then in the moonlight, which makes people so wicked and so wonderful, they looked at each other.

Presently "dear old Geoff" in a voice quite unlike his own said:—

"We can't go on like this."

Sheila made a movement with her head. It might have been a nod or might have been a shake. And the Controller of Downfalls whispered in Geoffrey's ear:—

"Be off and finish it by letter."

So he turned and swung down the hill and she watched him go with a hand pressed upon her leaping heart.

Geoffrey wrote his letter in all good faith. Love supplies its own logic, and though the sins of others may grieve us heartily our own can always be justified by circumstance. In asking Sheila to elope with him to an hotel in the New Forest Geoffrey felt he was not only doing a right, but a noble thing. To defy conventions demanded great sacrifice, and this he was prepared to make that true happiness might be hers. With deep reverence he assured her that the Almighty would bless and uphold their union. As a postscript he subscribed:—

"I will get leave. I shall await you at the Chessman's Hotel, Lyndhurst. A car will be at your door after tea. It is best that we do not meet before or travel together. God bless you. We are doing right."

The letter was brought to Sheila with her cup of morning tea. She read it wide-eyed and short-breathed. She read it a second time and shook her head. She put it under her pillow and hid herself beneath the sheets. There is a pleasing yellow beneath the sheets, and in that yellow light very secretly she read the letter again. As she read she spilled a tear upon the page.

"Of course, I sha'n't go," she whispered; "not for anything would I go," and was struck by the solemn sadness of her tone.

She refused her breakfast and hoped Fanny, the maid, would try to persuade her. Fanny, however, did no such thing, but quite unexpectedly gave a month's notice.

"Oh, no," wailed Sheila, "you don't have to go away."

To which Fanny resolutely replied, "I'm going to munitions. Can't stick a house without a man in it."

At the moment a more unfortunate sentiment could hardly have been expressed.

In misery Sheila walked by the sea. The spring was everywhere unfolding its loveliness and breathing its message to young hearts.

To Sheila's confused fancy the sportive wavelets seemed to cry, "Come out and be happy—I can't stand a house without a man in it."

Ever and anon she opened the folds of Geoffrey's letter and read a line or two. After a while she did not shake her head when she had finished reading.

Just to pretend she was going on her honeymoon, she packed a few trifles in her dressing-bag. One of the trifles was Leslie's photograph. It was a foolish pastime, but it gave her occupation. Somehow she could not remain idle, and toward the end of the afternoon was walking restlessly up and down the bedroom, clasping and unclasping her hands.

Then the door opened and Fanny said :—

"A car's come for you."

And next she knew that the car with herself inside was rolling swiftly and silently down the road. She had forgotten all about the dressing-bag, but as she huddled back against the cushions she said to herself :—

"I want to be happy again—I'm going to be happy!"

But although she said it many times, it did not ring very true to her ears.

Geoffrey arrived at the hotel about six o'clock with an hour to spare. He found the waiting intolerable and the sweat stood out upon his brow. To reassure himself he repeated over and over again :—

"I am doing right; God bless her."

His concern excited casual interest with one or two residents, and, observing this, Geoffrey hid himself behind a copy of the *Times*. The page before him contained a list of casualties to officers. One name rose out above the rest and hit him fair.

"Lieut. L. R. Whittaker, Royal Seabright Highland Regiment. Killed in action."

"Good God!" cried Geoffrey.

And this was the man whose wife would be coming at any moment. No, she would have seen the announcement! But suppose she had not seen it—suppose she came all unknowing—what then?

The honour and chivalry of Geoffrey—the kindness and solicitude which he had never failed to lavish upon his mother—sprang instantly to life. As a sportsman and gentleman this thing he had planned must be abandoned. No other solution would bear thinking of.

It is one thing to steal a living man's wife, but quite another to steal from the dead. The logic of this may not appear very sound, since the dead are no longer fretted with earthly concerns, but there is no doubt that anyone who might have occasion to consider the problem would support this view. To Geoffrey it was as plain as the writing upon the wall. His course was clear—love must be renounced.

Then very suddenly he became aware that he lacked the courage to tell Sheila of her husband's death—even as he had lacked the courage to forego the rapture of making illicit love to her.

In the midst of his agonized perplexity a car drew up before the hotel and Sheila herself, white and hesitating, came into the foyer.

Geoffrey rose and without a word led her to the terrace.

"Wait," he said, to the chauffeur, as they passed him. "So you've c-c-come."

"I—I've come—yes, but——"

"Go back," said "dear old Geoff," "my dear, we were w-w-wrong—b-b-blind and foolish; I'm—I'm ent-t-t-tirely to b-blame. It would have led n-n-nowhere."

"I know," said Sheila.

"Then go—and thank God we've s-s-s-seen the l-l-light in time."

It was quite dark when the car turned once more into the road where Sheila dwelt. She had forgotten her latchkey, so rang the bell, but there came no immediate answer, for Fanny was abed and slept heavily withal.

Sheila rang again, and as she did so a station fly drew up by the gate.

Next she knew that someone was yelling "Pottles," and smothering her with kisses—glorious kisses—kisses that could never have been so good from anyone else.

The door opened and they practically fell into the hall, followed by a cabman bearing much luggage.

"He's back," cried Sheila to the startled and curling-pinned Fanny.

In the drawing-room they hugged and kissed and cried over each other as never before.

"Ain't it gorgeous," gasped the Hon. Leslie. "I wouldn't have spoiled that by telling you beforehand, not for all the world—and I've strained my heart—I'm back for heaven knows how long—I never felt better in my life—and oh—oh, Pottles darling, have you missed me?"

"So dreadfully," began Sheila; "so dreadfully that——" But bless her heart, she never finished the sentence, for after all there is a good deal of difference between chocolate and coal.

Providence, unkindly it must be admitted, had thought fit to deprive the Hon. Leslie of his cousin, Lawrence Raymond Whittaker, but in so doing had shown great wisdom and infinite clemency.

There is just one point which is hard to decide satisfactorily, and that is to determine the true feelings of "dear old Geoff" in this matter.

Was that worthy young man filled with a pious joy in that he had restored the little wanderer unharmed to a bridal couch rather than to the woes and prickings of bereavement?

Or was he not?

It would take the brain of a Boccaccio to decide.

Three of Them.

About Naughtiness and Frogs and Historical Pictures

By

A. CONAN DOYLE.

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE.

THERE are all sorts of types and moods of childish naughtiness, as every harassed parent knows. With these three particular little people the difference was quite marked. Laddie was rarely naughty, but if he was it was in a despairing, can't-help-it, very-sorry-but-you-will-have-to-put-up-with-it way which it was difficult to deal with. Dimples, on the contrary, was cold-blooded and deliberate, with a determined "I-will-now-do-some-mischuff" air, which invited spanking. Baby was seldom obstreperous, but it took her, when it did come, in an "I-don't-care-a-blow-for-anybody-and-I'm-going-to-kick-my-slipper-up-the-ceiling" delirium of wickedness which it was impossible to control, so that a distressed Lady and a secretly chuckling Daddy could only wait till the weather cleared.

This is preliminary to the fact that Dimples had been exceedingly naughty in his own characteristic fashion upon the day under discussion. The truth was that he had been disappointed, and when that happened he usually ended by taking it out of someone. The disappointment was that in a too expansive moment Daddy had given him to understand that some day the tribe would gather in the dead of night and would burn down the chauffeur's cottage, with a rain of arrows directed all the while upon the windows and door. Dimples had prepared the bundles of straw, and now it had to be explained to him that Daddy had got a little beyond what was practical, and that the law had a fussy and unreasonable objection to games of that kind.

Then there was something else which had shaken his nerves up on the day before. It was a tragedy in three scenes. The first scene was that Dimples discovered a wasps' nest and stirred it up. The next was that a wasps' nest discovered Dimples and stirred *him* up. The third—well, the result of it was heard all over a quiet country parish, for Dimples has the largest howl to the square inch that has ever been heard. So perhaps after such an experience there was some little excuse for his being contrary after all.

But it took the queerest shape—like many of his vagaries—for his ways were

Laddie.

Baby. The Lady. Dimples.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

"CHARGING, WITH CLENCHED TEETH AND RAGING FISTS, AT LADDIE."

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"SIX LARGE FROGS WERE SITTING HEAD-ON, WITH THEIR GOGGLE EYES TURNED UPWARDS, ON THE GRASS MARGIN OF THE POND."

original. It began by sticking remarks of his own into his prayers, which were by no means of a humble or prayerful character. Thus he said, addressing his Maker, "Please make me a good boy—which I am!" At the dictation of his mother he said, "Please teach me self-control to others," and added, "please also teach others self-control to me." Finally he showed how much he needed this self-control by completely losing his temper, and charging in tears and fury, with clenched teeth and raging fists, at Laddie, who looked with gentle contempt at the furious figure, and remarked icily, "*Do* blow your nose!" which brought the charge to an ignominious halt. That was a touch of Laddie's knightly spirit, as cool, proud, and reserved before menace as he was soft and yielding to love.

So the rascal was punished and dismissed to the garden, where he was to remain until he felt chastened. Presently, however, his parents relented in the weak way they had, and strolled out into the garden to see the flowers, or the weather, or how the potatoes were coming on, or any excuse upon earth which would hide from each other their true purpose, which was to see how the exile was enduring his sufferings—each, of course, being perfectly aware all the time of the other's duplicity. There was no sign of the sinner, but presently, as they approached the little bush-girt pond, they heard a high, tremulous, childish voice. These were the words they heard:—

"Once on a Cannibal Island dwelt
A—dark—eyed—maid——"

Daddy signalled caution, and the two grown-ups, as if they were playing Indian games themselves, crept up to the bushes and looked over. It was a scene which each will remember. The child stood facing the pond, swinging his hand and nodding his head as he chanted:—

"She turned very red and
she snorted and said,
'I wouldn't leave my little
hut for you-oo-oo!
I've got one lover, and I
don't want two-oo-oo.'"

His eyes as he sang this weird ballad, which he had learned from his nurse, were so fixed and set that it was easy to discover his audience. Six large frogs were sitting head-on, with their goggle eyes turned upwards, on the grass margin of the pond. They looked absurdly like six rather over-fed critics in the front row of the stalls.

"Halloa!" said Daddy, coming round the corner, and there were six flops in the water. The critics were gone.

"Halloa!" said Dimples, cheerily. He never bore a grudge, even when he had to be whipped.

"Singing to the frogs?"

"*And* two water beetles," said Dimples, who had a curious control over animals. "There was a newt, but he wouldn't stay."

"Do you think they liked it, dear?" asked the Lady, putting her arms round her prodigal.

"Oh, yes, I *know* they liked it. They puff their throats in and out when they like things. I sang it right through twice."

Baby and Laddie had appeared upon the scene. Baby was swollen with pride because she had been taken the day before to London to see what she called "an octopus" about her eyes. All day she sat about in corners with a piece of glass, pretending to be "an octopus," and acting, as the true artist does, not to impress others, but for her own amusement in the demure, self-contained way which is characteristic. "Wriggly," her ancient eider-down quilt fetish, was her absurd patient, and now, up-ended in all sorts of grotesque angles, it was having its eyes examined. She had insisted upon taking it with her to London, but as it was a most disreputable rag she had to compromise that it go in a cardboard box. "Yes, dear, I enjoyed the journey, but Wriggly was *so* stuffy in the box!" With the extraordinary imagination of young childhood she has rigged up quite a

"'WRIGGLY,' HER ANCIENT EIDER-DOWN QUILT FETISH, WAS HER ABSURD PATIENT."

family tree of relations for this tattered quilt, mere names most of them, but very vivid all the same. Some days before the Lady had been somewhat taken aback to learn that Baby had been married the day before. "Yes, dear, I have married Wriggly's brother," she explained, and went about for some days with an air of great importance in honour of her invisible bridegroom.

Allusion has been made in previous papers to the traces of racial stages which can be observed in the development of normal children: the animal stage, the savage stage, the hunter, the scout, even the fetish worshipper. But there is one stage which may well puzzle the student, and that is the make-pretence stage. It is well marked, comes suddenly, goes suddenly, and is very strong while it lasts. During this time the child continually pretends to be this or that, taking the pretence very seriously, carrying out the part very thoroughly, and showing wonderful ingenuity not only in its own playing of the *rôle*, but in the way in which at a moment's notice it will play up to the *rôle* of a companion, and find the right word. "I am the dog Crusoe," says Dimples. "Down, puppy, down!" says Laddie. In a moment each catches the spirit of the other. And their answers to objections come quick and sharp. "I am a thirty-foot rock snake," Laddie announced one day, and gravely acted the part till evening. "How in the world will you fit into your bed?" asked Daddy. "Oh, coil up, coil up!" said he.

Now and then the absurdity of it overcomes them and you hear that pleasantest of sounds, the sincere laughter of a child. But as a rule they are as grave as judges—if you can still use such a simile.

On one occasion early in the war Laddie, how was then a very small boy, was seen standing about with a gloomy and malevolent air of majesty. "Who are you to-day, dear?" asked his mother. "I am the German Emperor." "Oh, dear," said the Lady, "I don't think Daddy will like that at all!" "Daddy! A mere common Englishman!" said the Emperor. That was one of Laddie's naughty days and he was getting level in this fashion. With their nimble little wits they often, consciously or not, score off their elders. "What are you going to be when you grow up?" a sympathetic visitor asked Dimples. "Oh, I'll just do nothing, the same as Daddy," was the answer.

If you want to study the strange, quick workings of the child-mind, get a book with interesting pictures which excite the imagination, and then ask the young students what they are. Daddy has an illustrated history of the ancient world which is a perpetual joy to both master and to pupils. It begins with Babylonian affairs, and then Assyrian, Egyptian, Grecian, and so on in the order of the great empires. The Three will sit in an absorbed circle upon the hearthrug looking at the wall-carvings of their ancestors and speculating as to their meaning, while Daddy, overlooking them from his arm-chair, pretends to know a good deal more than he does.

"What's this?" he asks. The "this" happens to be a section of a neolithic grave, with skeleton and funeral pots in a circle all round it.

The children gaze at it earnestly.

"It's the inside of a Jumbo with a man he has eaten," says Dimples, with decision.

"Jumbos don't eat men," says Laddie. "Jumbos eat buns."

"Pots," says Baby. She speaks seldom, but always with decision and is usually right.

"Yes, dear, pots. The man is dead and buried, and these are for his use in the next world. That was their idea in those days. Now, then, what is this?"

"IT'S THE INSIDE OF A JUMBO WITH A MAN HE HAS EATEN."

"Uncle Remus sucking a wolf."

"Romulus and Remus. They were the two children who grew up and built Rome. They were nursed by a wolf."

"I wonder if they knew Mowgli?" said Laddie. "He had a wolf for a mummy, too."

"I'm jolly glad we've got a proper mummy."

said Dimples. "Fancy saying your prayers at night to a wolf! Wouldn't it be beastly?"

"But they grew up very strong," said Daddy, "and they made such a wonderful city that in time it conquered the whole world."

"But not England," said Laddie, stoutly.

"Yes, England too."

"Oo!" cried the children.

"But not *fairly*," said Laddie.

"Well, it was a good thing for England," said Daddy. "We were just painted savages and they taught us some sense. Now, boys, what is this?"

"SO THEY GUESSED AND PRATTLED AS THEY TURNED OVER THOSE FASCINATING LEAVES."

It is surprising what a lot of information the eager little brains can pick up, if you make the thing a game instead of a task. They had seen some of these pictures before, and now they were off full cry, each capping the other.

"That's where the Greeks play games."

"Chariots run round that place."

"That's a temple where God lived."

"That's Babylon, and they had big stone shelves and gardens on them, and the houses were made of mud, and they are just heaps of dirt now, with dogs running about."

"That's the king's palace. That's him killing lions on the wall."

"Now," said Daddy, "what's *that*?"

It was certainly a puzzle. An Egyptian overseer in a wall-painting was standing with his tablets telling off the work for a line of negro slaves. The arms were all held at strange angles.

"IT'S ONE MAN BOXING AGAINST SIX."

"It's one man boxing against six," said Laddie.

"It's a woman with six men that want to marry her," was Dimples' decision.

Baby could only shake her little curly head.

"Soldiers," said she.

So they guessed and prattled as they turned over those fascinating leaves, now arguing about the cave-painting of a prehistoric savage, now the picture-writing of an Indian, now some strange dado taken from a Yucatan temple buried in primeval forest. Daddy leaned back and smoked and watched and listened in the gathering gloom of evening, while the firelight came and went on the eager features of the children. They were the very last buds at the end of the newest branches of the great tree of life. And here in this book they were gazing at the work of those old, old flowers upon branches which had withered so long ago. They too would work and they would pass, and there would come yet others, as far from us as we from Babylon, who would stare and guess and laugh when they saw the pictures of our little ships and aeroplanes and rude appliances for outwitting Nature. It was all working and working—and to what end? The life-urge was terrific and relentless and it pushed them always on. Monkey men crouching in a cave at one end—pure spirit, perhaps, at the other. There was more in Daddy's mind than he could tell the children as he looked at the three heads clustered over the old book before the fire.

The Proper Gentleman.

By HYLTON CLEAVER.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

JOHNNIE stood back. At last his oppressor was blinking at him stupidly from the ropes; he was beaten; another blow would finish it. He poised himself for the knock-out, gauging his distance. He was agog with absolute delight; he knew that that sudden crash of cheering when Jake reeled had been for him. Till then they had thought he was beaten; they didn't know; the other had youth, but he was too old a hand to be beaten by it. He was going to win.

He moved suddenly forward.

Jake swung in to meet him, but Johnnie was just too quick. There came a lightning feint from his left, and as the beaten man ducked and exposed his chin, Johnnie slammed home his right in such a flash of speed as only the finest of pugilists ever acquire.

Then he moved back and stood watching, soberly, whilst his man lay huddled on the boards; saw the palpitating breathings and the helpless stare on the upturned face. It was Johnnie's last fight, and he had won.

There came an excited movement in that vast swaying crowd. Everywhere men were upon tip-toe, waiting for the cry of "Out!" that would permit them to cheer.

And, as Johnnie himself waited, a feeling of extraordinary sadness came over him. He stood patiently listening, and when at last the victory was his officially he turned and, dropping quickly out of the ring, disappeared down the gangway. Somehow he didn't want to stay for the joyous shouting of men who had backed him to win. They thought him a brave man and a manly one, and possibly he seemed so, but there was that in Johnnie's heart that had urged him all his life to play the man more in love than in any other phase of life. And the pity of it was that now, when his day had come, he knew himself the most unutterably inept and futile lover who ever lived. They imagined that, because he was a master with the gloves, all was well with him. They did not appreciate how the loss of Elsie would mean more in his scheme of things than any Lonsdale Belt, for they did not know that he, Johnnie Mead, light heavy-weight champion of England, who had meant all his life to be a knightly lover, stuttered.

In the days that followed he found himself procrastinating. Each day he said to himself: "I will go to-morrow. I will make up my mind to that." And when the morrow came, he shrank from the ordeal that would make him a buffoon before the little lady whom he loved, and said again, "To-morrow."

And then at last he found himself suddenly in the maelstrom, before he was half aware.

On a day when gentle rainfall had made a garden of all the countryside she had caught him up, was walking beside him down the lane; she was looking up at him with a smile of greeting. Then there came over him swiftly a sudden darkness, hiding from him all thoughts except the one terrifying truth that he stammered. He had tried to hide it from her. By speaking always in monosyllables, by clearing his throat with peculiar frequency, by acquiring an inscrutable and non-committal smile, by pretending that his hesitancy came only from extravagant care in picking his words, he had tried to deceive her. He wanted so much to look well in her eyes. And if she *had* to know, he longed for her to slip her arm through his and whisper:—

"It doesn't matter. You're a Man."

He wanted her to know how intensely he hated himself for this appalling weakness. But he could not say even that, and so she knew nothing of all these thoughts and longings at all.

She said: "What a lonely man you are! You always seem to be by yourself."

He turned to her with a sudden strained look in his eyes. His lips were tightly shut. He—the knightly lover—was going to try to speak.

The very first word would not come out.

He fought with his last breath to pronounce it, and at last he opened his lips to let it escape. There was no sound at all. It was absolutely ludicrous. He recovered himself with a jerk, coughed. At last he glanced at her. Thank Heaven, she was not laughing—was not even looking at him. Surely, though, she must be wondering why he didn't speak; was probably thinking him an outrageous idiot—discourteous, boorish, sour.

And then, quite suddenly, his first words came.

"Yes," he said, "I *am* a bit lonely. I——"

He came to a stop. His teeth began to chatter. He turned away, trying with all his might to master his tongue. He could not. Heavens! This was worse than ever. It was bad enough to keep silent, but silence could at least be explained away. To stop in the middle of a sentence was purely ridiculous. He could not hide it any longer. She knew now. Yes, she was looking at him. She had coloured a little. She wasn't laughing yet. She just looked troubled. He seemed to be hurting her. That was bad. Perhaps he had better not try any more. Yet he did so want to tell her that he had fought his last fight, that in future he meant

only to coach others, that he was going to settle down—perhaps in a cottage—and that he wanted her, that he could not do without her. Then, with a sudden explosive energy, he broke into speech again.

"Elsie," said he, "I want—I want—I——"

They had come to her gate. She had stopped and was looking away from him down the road. He stood erect, with one hand on the fence, a tall, well-built figure of manhood, his strong, clean-cut face sternly set, his eyes peculiarly sad.

"I want——" he said again, and dropped his eyes. He was beaten. His last chance was slipping out of his reach, and he was absolutely helpless. It was torture. He looked ahead, imagining for one moment the utter inferno his life would be hereafter, when she had gone, when he had lost her. And then she turned to him abruptly, with a petulant gesture.

"Oh, Johnnie," said she, "why *don't* you try to talk properly? It is so silly in a big man like you."

She was gone. He had lost her. She was walking slowly, sadly up the path.

It was the most agonizing minute of his life.

Johnnie Mead had a pupil. The youngster was doing so well that it seemed strange to look back and remember how short a time it really was since he had been a novice.

It was Johnnie's own style over again; the same long left, the same uppercut as the other man slipped in; only his build was rather more stocky and his limbs a little less lithe. And Johnnie had taught him. He had tried to bury himself in the task; he had wanted to forget that he had lost Elsie, and the best way to forget was to work, and he worked hardest at training Keith Long.

Keith came to him regularly, the first real pupil in the training camp that Johnnie wanted to establish—and Johnnie devoted his time to coaching him. Then there had come his first fight for money and an easy victory; others followed, and presently he had climbed to unexpected eminence, as yet unbeaten. So, to-night, he was fighting a tough old warrior who could test his worth, and Keith was piling up the points with his left, puzzling the other with clever footwork; and every round was his.

Comparatively, Johnnie was happy. He loved a stylish boxer, and the thought that he himself had taught this youngster all he knew delighted him.

To watch Keith landing not chance shots but definite blows in chosen places, to watch him blocking the other's solid counter-attacks, was nearly as good as being in the ring to do it himself. Of course, Keith won, and old hands of the ring came to congratulate Johnnie on his pupil and to commend his style.

Soon the papers were inserting paragraphs about this *protégé* of Johnnie Mead's, and asking irritably why the man who (since Johnnie) had been the accepted champion did not agree to meet him forthwith.

Soon public opinion demanded and eventually obtained a match for Keith with a sportsman named Sailor Horne, and followers of the game in London sat back with smiles to await the day.

It came in due season, and Keith, who had no nerves, went into the ring with a rather self-satisfied smile, and joined issue. In the sixteenth round the fight was over and Keith was made. That night Johnnie looked him over approvingly and nodded his head.

"I can't teach you—any—m—more," he said, jerkily. "After this, it's up t—to you."

Keith shook hands with him.

It was a pleasing moment.

His task achieved, Johnnie began to see very little of Keith. Keith grew a little important. He fought two contests and began to be hailed as the find of the year.

And then one day there came to Johnnie a visitor. He was one of those old men who remember things, and though he had not nursed Johnnie when a child, Johnnie had bought him ale for many years and listened to anecdotes of which other folk would never wait to hear the end.

The old man thought much of Johnnie.

Johnnie nodded to him and waited with an agreeable smile.

"I'm wanting to speak to you," said the old man.

"C—come in," said Johnnie.

The old man went in. He sat down in Johnnie's chair and took a pinch of snuff.

"You've always been the proper gentleman to me, Johnnie Mead," said he; "I'm going to be the gentleman to you."

Johnnie nodded his head in pleased surprise.

"You used to be fond of a girl down my way," said the old man. "Maybe you're fond of her now."

Johnnie said nothing, but he drew himself up very straight. Certainly he was rather handsome.

"She's in trouble."

"How?" snapped Johnnie.

"Her father," said the old man, "is broke."

"He—he always was," said Johnnie. "I wanted to take her away from her f—father."

"This time it's bad," said the old man. "He's mortgaged his home. He says to me two days ago, 'Miles,' he says, 'I'm broke.' 'Pity it ain't your neck,' says I. 'How do you mean?' says he. 'I'm thinking of Elsie,' says I. 'Elsie'll get me out of this,' says he. 'She's in with Keith Long, and he's making money like mother makes bread—in lumps. Elsie'll get me out of this.' 'Who told you?' says I. 'Keith,' says he."

There came a silence. Johnnie was still standing very straight, but now his hands were upon his hips and he was looking down at the old man earnestly.

The old man sniffed. He was coming to quite the best feature of his tale. He settled down in his chair and produced a pipe.

"Two days ago I was in the Blue Bull when Keith came in. We had a pint or so together, and then I drew him aside in a corner and says, 'Keith Long,' says I, 'what do you want to go tying yourself up to a girl for?' I was thinking

of you, you see, Johnnie. 'How do you mean, Miles,' says he, 'tying myself up?' 'Old Forrest,' says I, 'ain't you thinking of helping him out of an 'ole?' 'Yes,' says he, 'with the toe of my boot.' I looks at him a bit, and then I says, 'Keith Long,' says I, 'I want to give you a bit of advice. You're doing too well just now to go and get married in a 'urry.' By this time, do you see, there was a bit of a flush on his face—not all because of what I was saying. He'd been drinking a bit; he spoke thick-like. 'Married?' says he. 'D'you think I'd go and get married for old Forrest?' 'Keith Long,' says I, 'how much are you giving him?' 'What's that to you,' says he, 'you curious old bundle?' After that he says no more, but later on in the evening I went back to the Blue Bull, and he was sat in a corner swaying forward in his chair and thumping the table gently with his fist, and talking, he was, to two or three others.

"'You remember the case of Kingston?' says he. 'He took the girl down to the coast to get married and kept on putting it off till they got on the boat. And he pointed out that if she went back and left him, her father'd get no money at all. Remember? Well,' says he, 'that's a good way.'"

"He—he said that?" said Johnnie.

"All that," answered the old man, "and a bit more. If I'd been younger, my boy, I'd have stuck my finger into his eye, I would indeed."

Johnnie turned away.

"There's one thing more," said the old man; "there's just a month before the mortgage falls due, and before that Keith wants another fight—he says he'll need the money for his little jaunt—you understand—he wants another fight."

"Well?" said Johnnie.

"Why," said the old man, "just this. I'm thinking of taking a train into London and going slap in to the Editor of the London *Sportsman*, just to give him the news. I'm thinking of saying, 'See here, mister; the great Johnnie Mead is a-goin' to fight Keith Long, and, by Gyp, he's going to knock his head off.'"

Johnnie looked at him gravely.

"D'ye see?" said the old man. "Make it a 'winner-takes-all' fight—you'll get the purse—you'll give it to Elsie—you're not like Keith—you can let Elsie do whatever she likes."

"No," said Johnnie, "that wouldn't do. She'd think I was blackmailing her too."

"Then," said the old man, "give it to me—and I'll see she gets it all right—only for her sake—you've got to stop Keith. What d'you say? Shall I tell 'em the news in London? Shall I tell 'em Johnnie Mead's a-goin' to fight?"

"Yes," said Johnnie, "b—by all means t—tell 'em that."

He walked along the gangway slowly, as he had always used to do, and climbed easily into the ring. Then he moved to his chair and, sitting down, only looked round the audience once, and did not nod to anyone at all. He was simply clad in black, without a scarf around his waist or badge upon his chest, nor was he hideously tattooed, but his limbs were long and perfectly proportioned and his crisp hair was brushed back pleasantly from his forehead.

Probably, therefore, you would not have thought him a professional boxer at all; at most he seemed only an athlete, just a little past his prime, and above all a manly man without conceit!

Keith Long jumped nimbly into the ring and ran across to shake him effusively by the hand, and Johnnie looked up and half got to his feet as he shook. Then he sat back just as before, waiting.

They introduced him, and he heard the onlookers applaud. The sound seemed empty and brought him no content, for he was anxious; he knew that *they* had just come for an evening's entertainment, whilst he was there to fight the contest of his life. He heard the sound of a voice and looked up. Keith was greeting a friend several rows from the front; the friend cried out "Good old Keith!" waving his hand; and others of his set near by took up the cry. Finally, from a cheap seat right in the back of the hall an old man rose, hat in hand. He lifted his hat with dignity above his head and in a loud voice said respectfully, "Good old Johnnie Mead!"

Then he sat down contentedly, and Johnnie smiled and straightened his mouth again slowly as those words came back to him: "You've always been a proper gentleman to me. I'm going to be a gentleman to you."

And then there came the warning, and at last the gong.

He rose and was facing the man that he had taught to box, and at first it was difficult to remember that this was not just a practice bout. He had sparred so often with Keith, knew so well his capability and his characteristics, and for this reason he did not feel as he had used to feel in his fights. He had not the same keen curiosity or watchful interest in what the other man was going to do. He knew Keith's plans as if they were all written down for him in sequence. His only anxiety was to defeat him, somehow, sooner or later in the fight by ringcraft.

Keith was on top of him quickly; his long, straight left was tapping at him and the extra reach was troublesome. Johnnie countered and forced the pace. He was determined not to box on the defensive, as Keith would no doubt expect him to. He was not going to show anxiety. He was not going to allow this man, the fellow whose head had been turned so quickly by sudden notoriety, to call the time. He was trying to bully Elsie. He should not bully *him*.

It was a heavy round and the pace was hot. Yet Keith was undisturbed, and his irritating smile was still in evidence when the gong rang and he turned to his chair and sat down with an emphatic wink to his seconds. Johnnie gave no sign of any kind, but lay back restfully whilst his own men tended him, and when the next round was called he went forward with a lithe step and slipped into his man again sternly.

His was a graceful style, beautiful to watch; his long legs well apart gave him a perfect balance on his toes, and his shoulder muscles moved with a simple suppleness that made his blows easy and strong. Keith had a similar poise, but his build was not so notably proportionate; though his arms were long, his shoulders were hunched a little high, giving him rather the look of a Langford than a Wells. Yet his blows were heavy and his stand was firm, so that it was a difficult thing to catch him off his balance.

Johnnie had taught him the value of that, and now it was his aim to beat him with feints in the hope that he could bring in his right instead of the straight left to which this pupil had grown so used; but Keith was too wise to bite. Then Johnnie wondered if he would jump in, and wanted to swing up his upper-cut as Keith came, but even that did not materialize, and lastly he went back to the old straight left and landed because Keith guessed it was another feint.

That angered Keith inwardly and his smile grew broad in consequence. He knew that to smile sarcastically was irritating. Johnnie himself had told him so, and he hoped that Johnnie would try to strike him in the mouth, but Johnnie didn't.

Other rounds followed, and presently Keith had broken the skin under Johnnie's eye and was playing on it continuously, whilst Johnnie was leaving it open as a bait and striking light blows with his left, thinking that Keith would be tempted too far so that he might at last get in that upper-cut which would end things.

Keith came in willingly, but he came with a sure guard, and Johnnie could not find an opening, and at last he felt that Keith was landing too heavily and rather too often, and he stood up suddenly and fought him back.

In the sixth round Keith came with a rush, leading with either hand, at his topmost speed. Johnnie slipped calmly this way and that with perfect footwork, keeping always nicely balanced, but he could not escape it all, and he could not counter effectively whilst the pace was so very swift, but he kept his hard left going, piston-like, and his right was always blocking the way of the other's blows. Keith carried on with his effort and would not be denied. His youth was invaluable, and he knew it.

And he wanted to sit with Elsie in a taxi-cab, hands in his pockets, his feet upon a cushioned seat, looking at her appraisingly, and knowing that she knew that he had beaten the fellow that had taught him elementary fisticuffs, beaten him to a pulp.

There was no rest, no stalling off, or playing for time or clinching. It was a fight. Again and again they clashed in a ding-dong struggle for the upper hand. Ringcraft and cunning could not turn the tide, and now each knew that it must be the power of blows that would finally mark the winner. In the ninth round Keith ceased to smite so everlastingly. Now and again he suddenly remembered and laughed once quickly, but on the whole he had grown less perfectly serene. He felt that he was not making headway. He had tried to drive Johnnie back to the ropes and lash him with stinging blows, and Johnnie had stood up squarely and taken what he could give and then stepped in to answer him.

He thought that Johnnie was tiring, but he did not know. He might be only foxing. It was worrying.

Then, suddenly, Johnnie launched his own attack. He had gauged his power of endurance accurately. This was to be his own big effort. He walked right in. Keith was a little surprised and tried to evade him, but Johnnie caught him gloriously with a terrific right and steadied him for the rest of the round. Keith tried to work in close and tire his man by worrying him in clinches. It did not come off. Johnnie smote again and again, clean blows that landed definitely on chosen places. Keith swung in to stop him and tried to force Johnnie back with half-arm jabs. It was no good. Johnnie was in his element. He led and led again. Forced into it, Keith joined issue at last fairly and squarely and they stood up toe to toe, and gave slam for slam, till each was rocking unsteadily from sheer exhaustion. Still they were level. Each meant to be the last to land a blow, and they slowed down until each punch was slow and heavy to deliver, until it was hard to see and difficult to stand, and fought on doggedly wearing each other down, hitting out wearily to the last.

And again there came to Keith a vision of fame achieved, of crowds gathered about him praising his greatness, pointing him out to strangers; a vision also of Johnnie staggering home alone with swollen eyebrows and broken lips, beaten before a mighty crowd; and again there came to Johnnie the memory of Elsie and her sorrow.

The gong rang, and their seconds drew them to their corners, whispering earnest counsel, sponging away the traces of the fight. But the two men did not listen at all or care, but just sat gazing at one another grimly, maybe unseeingly, waiting for that which would surely be the last round of all.

They rose at the gong, and the absolute silence in the hall was overpowering. They met, and without a moment's hesitation smote heavily one at the other. They moved this way and that, always in combat, never at rest; resolutely slamming out blow after blow. And still neither would give way, still neither could forge ahead.

And then Keith stumbled angrily sideways, and swung unexpectedly with his right as Johnnie followed, and Johnnie ran into it blindly and reeled. Keith sprang in unsteadily and swung his right again, Johnnie slipped him and countered with his own, and Keith, who was unprepared, stumbled and fell.

For a second or two he lay still, and then he rose and looked savagely for his man. Johnnie was standing back watching him with a stare, and as Keith got up he came in again. Keith waited for him to strike, and then, as he did so,

jumped in and upper-cut. Johnnie was stopped. He staggered a moment, recovered, looked dazedly for Keith. Keith was beside him. He swung towards him and Keith struck again, but Johnnie would not go down. He swayed and his head rocked stupidly sideways. Then, for a moment or two, the two men stood with legs apart and limp arms, gauging each other's strength, and suddenly both hit. Again they steadied themselves. Each was deaf to the growing rumble of excitement along the crowded seats. Johnnie knew nothing of the old man at the back of the hall who was craning his neck and sobbing imprecations to his neighbour. He knew only that he had got to hit again. He saw Keith collecting his strength, saw him prepare to strike; then quick as lightning he straightened himself, leaned forward, and drove one last clean blow straight at that lowered jaw. And as he struck Keith's glove shot out and caught him directly between the eyes. He swayed and tried to steady himself, knew he was falling backwards. He tried to lean forward, tried to straighten his feeble legs, strove with all his might to fight down the coming insensibility. He could not see. He could hear, faintly, a distant shouting, but could not comprehend it. He was done—it was over—yet, with the final atom of his strength, his will triumphed, and for a moment he stood squarely as he had stood when he had struck at Keith, and looked for his man. The mighty audience, utterly unable to keep silent, were venting their feelings in a long continuous roar.

And then he saw.

Keith was lying in a huddled heap on the boards and they were counting him out!

As he realized this great amazing fact his glassy eyes slowly closed, and as his knees were sagging helplessly he sighed, and falling backwards struck the boards heavily with the back of his head and lay still.

The timekeeper was on his feet, his eyes upon his watch, his hand extended, pointing at the huddle that was Keith.

"Out," said he, and on the instant a strange delighted figure bounded into the air far away down the crowded seats and, flinging his hat high above his head, cried loudly:—

"Johnnie Mead! Johnnie Mead wins!" but in that great cheering nobody heard his cry.

"Mead's out, too," cried the man who had greeted Keith so cheerfully. "Mead's out, too!"

"Long was out first," said his neighbour.

And in the ring men were bending over Johnnie Mead, wondering why he lay so stiffly still—whilst only the doctor who had seen how his head had hit the boards had guessed.

"AND THEN HE SAW. KEITH WAS

The old man who remembered things rose from beside the bed contentedly.

"And so you owe it to me," said he. "I just raised it to lend to you—to give to her, d'you see? And as you were like this I just give it to her myself, on your behalf—you owe it to me, that's all. Fortunate-like, I done a good turn or two for a little Jew man I know of, and he let me have just enough to keep the wolf out of her doorway till you come to. You can let me have the rest this evening, if convenient to yourself, and I'll settle up. There'll be a bit of interest for him, you see."

"You're a brick, Miles," said Johnnie Mead.

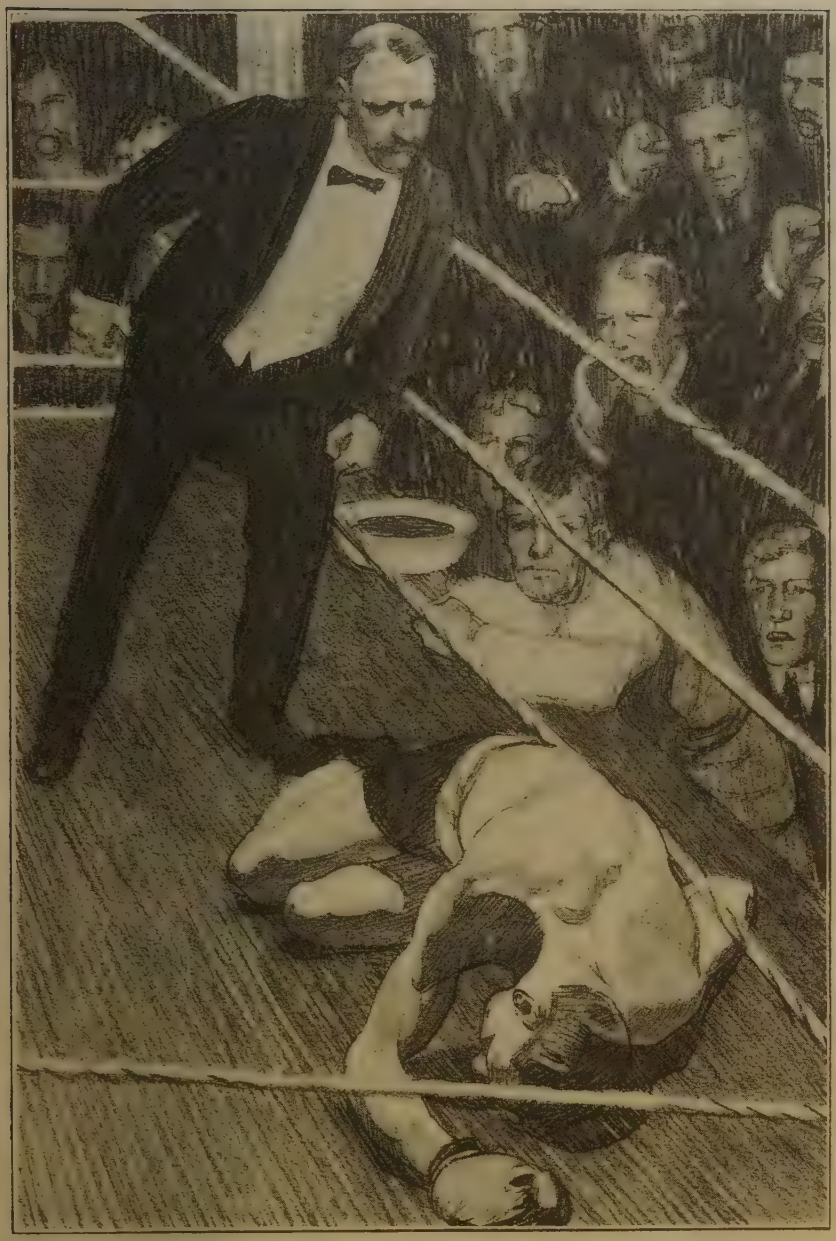
The old man nodded his head in total accord.

"You were always a proper gentleman to me," said he. "I been a gentleman to you. What I can't get over is that a crack on the skull should put your talking right like this. A miracle, I call it. I'm thinking of trying the same cure for my chronic rheumatics."

He turned and wandered out of the room, shaking his head.

"I'll send her in," said he.

Johnnie turned over in bed and faced the door. The bandages were off and his eyes were



LYING IN A HUDDLED HEAP ON THE BOARDS AND THEY WERE COUNTING HIM OUT!"

not aching any longer. The breeze from the open window seemed something new. He had been unconscious so many days that it was good to know that the black oppression of everything was not real after all.

He moved his lips tentatively.

It was true. He knew it. He could talk; he could express himself like any ordinary man. Something had happened. He was not going to stutter any longer. Somehow it seemed too good to be true—yet he had proved it. Certainly he still spoke hesitantly, as if he were picking his words—but he knew that at last he could talk to Elsie without chattering in her face like a monkey or making odd sounds. It was amazing.

She was coming towards him. He found himself smiling up at her. He just couldn't help it—she looked so lovable—just a little shy. He reached out his hand.

"Halloa, Elsie!" said he.

She came and stood beside his bed and looked down at him wistfully.

"Are you better?" said she at last.

"I'm better, and I can talk," said he, with an almost boyish pride.

She sat down and began to smooth the quilt thoughtfully. She could find nothing else to say. Moments passed. He was screwing up his courage. At last he looked up at her.

"Look here," said he, "d'you know what it was I wanted to say that afternoon?"

She did not answer. She was looking away. "You were cross that day," he announced, reproachfully; "it makes me afraid to say it—now."

Still she did not speak.

He grew restless, moved in his bed; at length he reached out his hand.

"I say——" he began.

Then at last she spoke, slowly and in a small voice.

"I was only cross," said she, "because I did so want to hear you say it, and you took such a long, long time!"

The EVIDENCE for a SPIRIT WORLD.

How does it stand to-day?

An Interview with

Sir Oliver Lodge

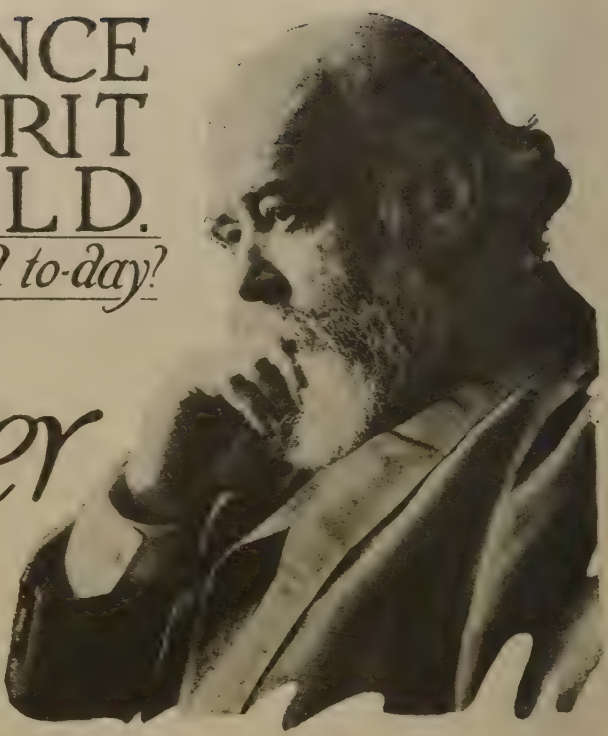


Photo. Lafayette.

"WELL, Sir Oliver," began the interviewer, "I have been instructed to ask you how Spiritualism stands to-day?"

"I can't answer for Spiritualism," Sir Oliver replied. "I don't much like the word myself, except as a term in Philosophy. In so far as Spiritualists constitute a sect, and hold religious services, I don't belong to it and have no sort of connection with it; though doubtless it attracts many good people."

"But surely the subject has a scientific as well as an emotional and religious side?"

"Yes, like everything else; and on its scientific side it is at present commonly known as Psychical Research. The research began as an inquiry into unrecognized or partially recognized human faculty, and still continues on those lines; but incidentally the discovery of telepathy rendered probable the deduction that the body and the mind were not inseparable, and hence that one might survive the other. And further experience has led some of us to regard the fact of survival also as now at length scientifically demonstrated."

"That is surely a matter of the first importance?"

"Yes, I agree; it is so important that great care and caution are necessary before it can be regarded as fully and finally established. In fact, I doubt if ever the proof will be so clinching as to overpower the hostility of those determined to think otherwise: with some of whom I cannot but sympathize since I realize their difficulties. I don't pretend that it is an easy matter to conceive of the personality and the memory surviving the destruction of the brain. All I claim is that if they are as a matter of fact found to be so surviving, it will amount to a demonstration that the brain is only an instrument or organ, made use of by something not material at all—something which exists in the psychical, not the physical region, something which was only developed or trained in association with matter.

"The brain will then be relegated to its proper position as one of the organs of the body—an instrument for communicating, not an originating and thinking entity. Discarnate mind may still require some vehicle for manifestation, but it need not be a vehicle formed of the ordinary matter to which we are accustomed. Or if a brain is still necessary in order to communicate with us here and now, some portion of another person's brain may conceivably be occasionally utilized for that temporary purpose. Such a person would be what is called a medium: a medium of communication."

"In your view, I take it, the independence of mind and matter is proven?"

"In popular terms, yes. The mind is more permanent than its bodily instrument: it certainly survives the present body, and remains completely itself."

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"Can you give me an idea of how this has been established?"

"Popularly speaking, by the experience of a multitude of bereaved persons. Scientifically speaking, by the system of cross-correspondence and other rather complicated kinds of evidence of continued identity."

"Why do you distinguish between the two methods of proof, the scientific and the popular?"

"Because the possibility of telepathy from the sitter, or from the unconscious minds of other living persons, necessarily complicates what appears on the surface to be good evidence for a telepathic or other mental influence from the dead. To eliminate this bugbear of telepathy from the living, and establish the fact that the dead are just as vivid and active as those still in the body, has been the special effort of some leading members of the S.P.R. who have already gone over to the other side, and have there continued their work. And in my view,—by classical and other literary ingenuities, and by the system of cross-correspondence whereby one mind was proved to be purposely and systematically acting on a number of independent mediums unknown to each other—they have been successful. But it is a matter of opinion on which students who devote sufficient time and attention to the documents may perhaps legitimately differ; though I am not aware that any such students, after all the experience they have now gained, actually do differ. The opinion of those who either have not the facts before them, or who do not think them worthy of study, is of course valueless."

"Leaving those more recondite matters, can you give me an idea of what you call the popular proofs of survival?"

"Certainly. A fairly large number of bereaved people go anonymously, by arrangement made for them, to some reputable and trustworthy medium. No normal information is desired by such mediums, and none is given; they prefer to be in complete ignorance regarding their clients.

"Sometimes such a bereaved person is accompanied by an experienced note-taker, who records all that is said throughout. In many cases—I should say in the majority of cases dealt with by aid of a strong medium in good form—the evidence for the identity of a deceased communicator, who is represented as anxious to get into touch and to send messages—messages of affection and messages of identification—is felt to be strong; and occasionally it has been overwhelming."

"In spite of the risk of possible mind-reading?"

"Well, that is a point that can hardly be settled on one case, or a few cases; its discussion involves a good deal of experience. The body of evidence which has now accumulated is very great, and the hypothesis of mind-reading from the sitter has to be stretched to near breaking-point in order to counteract the dramatic semblance of the whole, and reduce it, not indeed to normality, but to something less important than actual conversation with the intelligence and personality of the departed."

"Can you remember a few instances?"

"I can remember in general terms a great many, but to make any real use of them the records in each case would have to be studied."

"Yes; but let me give our readers some notion of the sort of thing that is felt to be satisfactory by those who go in distress and come away comforted. Some general idea of the kind of evidence that is got."

"Well, I'm not sure that I ought to talk in general terms, and a great many of your readers already know of cases which might be given in illustration. But, inasmuch as a large number of men at the present time are facing death for our sake, it is perhaps only fair that the fact, as I consider it, that death is but an episode in continued existence, and that the interest and enjoyment of life after death exceed what has been experienced here, should be made more widely known; and on that ground I may be excused for giving a rough summary of the popular evidence."

"I wish you would."

"Take, then, a young fellow killed in the war, and suppose his parents succeed in getting into touch with him. He will greet them in his accustomed manner, calling them by the name they are used to, from him. In some cases 'Pater,' in others 'Dad,' sometimes by an unusual nickname such as ''Erb,' sometimes simply 'Father.' Whatever had been customary, that is employed, in the most natural manner, by the dead son. He may ask after his brothers and sisters by name, or at least by initial, for names are sometimes troublesome things to get through. He may give characteristic touches or comments about each, sometimes thereby showing that he knows in a general way what they are now doing. His own appearance can be described by the medium, and little trivial peculiarities or blemishes are often noted, such as scars or marks of an identifying character.

"As to incidents—I remember one case where a young deceased communicator said to his parents that he had made an appointment to meet his brother in France at a certain bridge, but that when they got to the rendezvous the bridge was no longer there, it had been blown up. A subsequent letter from the surviving brother in France completely confirmed this statement. The parents had known nothing about these facts at the time of the sitting.

"Here is another case: Three brothers

were all killed; the medium gave the names of all three, to mother and sister who were present; and one of them, the youngest, was represented as the spokesman, ultimately sending a message to his father—'Tell him that I have not been talking *all* the time.' The verbal exuberance of this particular member of the family had often been humorously suppressed by the father.

"In another instance a boy spoke of something in a waistcoat-pocket which he wanted given to his young brother. His clothes had been folded and put away, but on examination a coin was found in the place described.

"A frequent test given is a description of the old house where the family had lived, small details and peculiarities being emphasized, arrangements of furniture, pattern on wall, and sometimes even the books in a bookcase being remembered."

"It seems odd for trivial details to be remembered. Can they answer specific questions?"

"They do not always remember what the inquirer expects them to remember; and if they do, it is liable to be put down to mind-reading.

"To challenge a communicator suddenly to bethink himself of some forgotten incident, and to recall it to the sitter's memory, is to set a difficult problem; but occasionally even that can be responded to—as when an old fishing expedition was recalled wherein two boats were employed, and on the capture of an unwieldy fish by one, a native in the other boat had called out, 'Eh! look at yon fish, it's got a face like a mon.' . . . But I am hardly justified in mentioning this case; for the facts have not been published, and I am insufficiently acquainted with them.

"Another incident, of a very different kind, concerns two boy-friends who died of illness within ten days of each other but separated by a considerable distance. The death of the first boy, named Herbert, was kept from the knowledge of the second; yet, when he too died, his friends report that he smiled and said, 'Why, Herbert, I *am* glad to see you!'"

"Have you read Mr. E. F. Benson's recent book called 'Up and Down'?"

"Yes, I have; someone sent it me. He makes there a careful study of a character called Francis, which is the special feature of the book, and at the end he gives an example of an identifying message of a very strong and complete character.

"But the worst of it is, I don't know what is the precise foundation for this incident. A writer of fiction is not trammelled by fact, and though I presume the incident is based upon something definite, it may have been improved upon."

"Does it seem to you unlikely?"

"The only unlikely thing about it is that so good a piece of evidence should have been got by a novice at his first sitting. That *is* unlikely; but as to the incident itself I don't see any reason for disbelieving it, if it were properly and responsibly and fully authenticated."

"Do you know if Mr. Benson has done this?"

"I do not. Nor need he be challenged to produce his authority for what may be an imaginary episode; only people should remember to treat it as imaginary until claimed as authentic. I have no fault to find with it, as an imaginary episode, except that it is almost too thorough and complete. It does not, however, eliminate the possibility of telepathy from the living, as the writer evidently thinks it does. It could be regarded as an example of a deferred or stored telepathic impression, unconsciously produced on his friend during the secreting of objects in the box. I admit that the hypothesis is rather forced."

"Tell me of some other incidents."

"Some good ones were published by Mr. Wilkinson in the *London Magazine* for October, 1917. They are rather typical instances of the kind of thing that occurs. The name 'Poger,' for instance, and reference to a bronze thing like a coin, in his satchel. A similar case is related by Sir William Barrett in his book, 'On the Threshold of the Unseen,' page 184. A young officer who had been killed said he wanted a pearl tie-pin, which would be found in his kit, sent to a lady whom he named at a certain address, saying that he had been secretly engaged to her. Nothing of all this was known by the family; but the communication was so clear that they wrote a letter of inquiry to the address given. The letter came back marked 'Unknown,' and the whole thing was thought to be imaginary or a meaningless fabrication.

"When his kit came back, however, a pearl tie-pin was found in it; and when later on his will was discovered, the young lady's name, just as it had been given at the sitting, was mentioned as his residuary legatee, and his engagement to her was admitted. Everything was correct, therefore, except the address. Why the address was wrong I don't know. The fact that it was wrong perhaps allowed the other portions of the communication to be verified in a more gradual manner. But usually in cases of this kind there is some little part of the communication which is wrong; and it is most charitable to attribute the error to difficulties in communication, or to unsuspected lapse of the medium into normality; like a sort of momentary waking up in the middle of a dream, and then continuing it again after an interval of imaginative inventiveness not justified by anything in the main dream, nor by anything for which the main communicator was responsible; indeed, he might not know that it had been interpolated."

"Mistakes of that kind must increase the difficulty of satisfactory proof?"

"Undoubtedly. Human instruments, however honest and painstaking, are necessarily defective at times, and these little uprushes or lapses into normality—often called 'padding' or by other severer names—can, perhaps, hardly be avoided. An experienced investigator generally tries to allow for and understand and discount them; though, of course, he records them all, and rather emphasizes them than otherwise. They often puzzle and disconcert a novice; and indeed in a bad sitting, when the medium is out of order, they may be sufficient to disconcert anybody.

"But the difference between a good sitting and a bad one is very great; and though a bad sitting may be misinterpreted or thought too well of, it is barely possible to mistake a really good one. Also, of course, it is during the good periods that the best proofs are obtained."

"A good medium, I presume, is one with whom the good periods predominate?"

"Exactly. There is no such thing as infallibility."

"Are things not sometimes thought wrong which really turn out right?"

"Yes; some striking examples of messages at first thought wrong or meaningless, but subsequently found justified by rather laborious inquiry among comparative strangers, are given in the books of Mr. J. Arthur Hill—'Psychical Investigations' and 'Man is a Spirit' (Cassell). I have come across singular cases of this kind myself. In such cases telepathy from the sitter, as an explanation, is absurdly impossible. The survival hypothesis, in practice, *works*: all others require straining, and supplementing, and using alternatively on different occasions."

"You are, then, satisfied that existence is not limited to this present life on earth?"

"I am, absolutely. And death now seems to me something rather to look forward to than to dread. Clearly it is an interesting adventure; and usually I don't really think that the episode itself is a painful one. Recovery from an accident or from unconsciousness—the 'coming to'—may be painful, but the passing away usually is not."

"Would it not be well that this knowledge should be more widely disseminated?"

"If people have a reasonable knowledge of what to expect when they find themselves suddenly transferred to other conditions, the transition is hardly even a shock. It is surely desirable that people who face great dangers should be prepared for what may happen to them, and take it as a part of life's experience. It is certainly wrong, and desperately misguided, to seek that experience prematurely; but sooner or later it is bound to come, and if it come in the course of duty and in a struggle for a noble cause, they may be happier to whom it thus comes than we who will soon encounter it in a more prosaic way. They may be happy in the opportunity. The readiness is all."

ACROSTICS.

With Acrostic No. 55, printed below, our tenth series of six acrostics begins. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 55.

To where the sun sets turn your eyes;
And now to where the sun will rise.

1. It maketh glad the heart of man:
One letter in another scan.
2. Beyond, unusual, something more:
Look in a bill or cricket score.
3. Found with the stars: of varying hue—
Well-suited would be black and blue.
4. Monosyllabic word will name
A rapid pace or aged dame. PAX.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 56.

Two kinds of War. By *this* men smash the foe,
While *that* assists him backward not to go.

1. Ah well, at least I once must young have been.
2. Two men and various documents are seen.
3. Though third, two more will make it fifth, I ween.
4. As in the centre, find we comfort great.
5. First three or last three him will indicate.
6. Bill made his mark. Set them upright and straight.
7. This regiment a Member does surround.
8. Here's lively music if an ace be found.
9. The river's middle letter gives its sound. GEEGEE.

Answers to Acrostics 55 *and* 56 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* The Strand Magazine, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.*2, *and must arrive not later than by the first post on December* 10*th.*

The solution to each acrostic must be on a separate piece of paper; a second answer may be sent to any or every light, and should be written at the side of the first one; at the foot of each solution every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else. This pseudonym should be limited to one word.

Answer to No. 54.

1.	C	omfor	T
2.	A	rr	O
3.	R	esiduu	M
4.	R	bar	A
5.	O	tran	T
6.	T	ych	O

Notes.—Light 1. Southey, *Roderick*, ix. Light 2. Parrot. 4. Barbara; the mnemonic, in logic. 5. Otranto. 6. Behar, Tycho Brahe.

In No. 51, "Immermann" is a valid answer to the sixth light, and all spellings of the last light are accepted as correct.

Ten Years Deep

by L. J. Beeston

ILLUSTRATED BY STEPHEN SPURRIER

WHEN he heard that announcement, those simple words: "A person to see you, sir," the weight which had been pulling his heart down for so, so long, became suddenly doubled, bringing a physical pang which burned the health in cheeks and lips to ashes, and the colour of ashes.

"A person?" echoed Filson Straws, after his servant.

"Yes, sir. He would not give a name, but insisted on seeing you."

Of course, it was Legree—Harney Legree. It was not that the servant had used the non-committal word which would describe him; it was rather a swift intuition which stabbed Filson with the realization that the thing he had so long eluded would be eluded no more.

"Let him come up, James," said he, briefly.

Immediately upon the soft closing of the door the occupant of the study laid his half-finished cigar upon a groove in the brass ash-tray on the huge and magnificently-carved ebony desk before him. Then he got up and stepped swiftly to the mirror over the mantelpiece.

He put his eyes close to the ghostly image which the crystal presented to him. He pinched his cheeks, set his strong teeth into his lips to call up the reluctant red of his blood. The door-handle rattled in a grasp, and Filson Straws turned.

With a firm, strong step his visitor entered the room. He wore a square-cut, dark-blue serge, coarse welted shoes, and held a bowler hat in his right hand. His face was formed on rather strong lines, and the cold blue of his eyes did not suggest that many things could frighten this man.

Right enough, it was Harney Legree, but Filson did not call him so, for he nodded with a half-smile and said, "You have come to see me on a chilly night, Jason. Take a chair."

He accompanied this invitation with a nod to a straight-backed chair against a wall; but the visitor chose that one as a place of rest for his hat. He came forward to expand his numbed palms to the fire, then dropped, not without a certain natural ease of manner, into a big divan chair by the side of the blaze. Slowly his keen blue eyes travelled round the room.

"It is very nice here," said he, in a deep, slow voice. "The noise of the West-end traffic does not pass through those heavy windows. You might be in the heart of the country."

The other drew a long, a deep breath. He had to force a frown, to assume a reprimand of familiarity. "Jason," he began, severely, "I do not expect——"

"Cut out the Jason," was the interrupting response. "You have used that long enough. You know perfectly well that I am Harney Legree."

Straws put out his hands and gripped the edge of the mantelpiece. The fire-warmth streamed up over his cold face. He looked sideways at his visitor, who was staring calmly and reflectingly into the blaze. He went back to his chair by the huge ebony desk and sank into it. A pallid and quivering thread from his still-burning cigar rose up straight as a column between him and his visitor.

The latter looked round at last. He repeated: "You know that I am Harney Legree, Straws?"

"Certainly I know it."

"You found that out just fifteen months ago, I believe?"

"Approximately—yes."

"And all that that means to you—you have not attempted to deceive yourself in regard to that?"

"Not for one moment."

"You understand clearly that all this ease and comfort which surrounds you is not really yours at all?"

"It is not."

"And that I have a right to call it mine?"

"Unquestionably."

"Under the terms of Anthony Legree's will?"

"Under those terms."

"And no doubt my reason for keeping out of all these good things is known to you?"

"Perfectly."

"That for nearly three years I have been escaping the law?"

"I am aware of it."

"And that it is impossible for me to claim my right without disclosing the fact that I am not a dead man, as is believed?"

"Quite impossible."

"Which disclosure would mean anything between five and ten years in an American penitentiary?"

"Certainly that."

"Good. I see we have got the preliminaries."

Harney stretched out his legs on the rug and

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"HE LOOKED SIDEWAYS AT HIS VISITOR, WHO WAS STARING CALMLY AND REFLECTINGLY INTO THE BLAZE."

produced a pipe and tobacco-pouch from a side-pocket. Straws sat watching him.

Suddenly the sound of a pianoforte came down from the room above this one. Someone was executing, with a rare, a mobile touch, the Barcarolle of Moskowski. Legree lifted his head, listening intently.

"That is very nice," said he. "Who is the player?"

"My daughter Olive."

"Ah! I saw her with you one afternoon in the Green Park. She is a beautiful slip of a girl, that. But why does she impart a sadness to that thing? Then you have a boy, Straws, I believe? Where is he?"

"At Cambridge."

"So was I. Did you know that?"

"I have heard so."

"At Caius. Oh, what an infernally long, long time ago that seems! Heaven and earth, what draughts of life I have drunk since then! But I haven't come here to utter sentiment. Far from it. You and I have been dodging the point at issue for too long. I propose to settle it everlastingly before I leave this room. In fact, I mean to."

He screwed his shoulders into the back of his chair, tossed one leg over the other, gritted his teeth on his pipe.

"The situation is unique," he went on. "It bristles with perplexity. The bristles warded me off for fifteen months because I didn't want to prick myself. Now, just you listen with both ears.

"When I got into that sad mess in the States—we need not discuss that unpleasantness—I dived into obscurity like a scared rabbit. You see, I had got into a bank after office hours, and unluckily I had been given away. I was wanted bad. The police were sniffing on my trail. The one way to get them off was to make them abandon it. I contrived that by working an idea which was quite one of the smartest of the many questionable ideas I have developed. It made me a 'dead' man. The police found what they thought was the remains of poor me in a hut on a deserted ranch, dead of smallpox, in the fly season, with the glass steady over a hundred in the shade. You follow? No foul play, bear in mind; only the police made a mistake which I meant them to make.

"I came to England a year and a half later, very much 'incog.' and intending to remain so, naturally. But I couldn't resist one or two inquiries into the old life I had left here, and I soon got a high-tension shock that made me sit up. It seems that I needn't have quit the Sunday-school side of the law at all in that bank-bustin' business, since, on the very eve of the adventure, Uncle Anthony had expired and left me this more than snug nest in which you are so nicely coiled. True, his will stated that everything should pass to you should I die without any family of my own; but then, as you perceive, I am most uncommonly alive.

"Yes, I discovered that I am entitled to—to all this I see round about me. But between me and this niceness is an abyss. Impossible to jump across it. Let Harney Legree claim his property, and the police of America will be looking after an extradition order. I say, one can't jump across this infernal abyss, but one can pass *through* it. You get me, of course. Well, I am coming to that.

"The next thing I discovered when poking my nose about here was that you had seen and recognized me. You would do that more easily than others; and then there is a picture or two of me in this house which doubtless helped to jog your memory. And I soon knew you were on the scent, Straws, because you employed a man to find out as much as he could about

me. I spotted him first time. All he found out was that I was plain Jason, an engineer's assistant Shoreditch way which was a job I got, having to live.

"By James, I was more than interested in the situation! I wondered ever so what you would do. The bank-bustin' was known here, having drifted across. Was I afraid? Not much I wasn't! You could never expose me, for that would mean your own ruin. By all the rules of the cards, Straws, you ought to have dropped me like a white-hot bar. Yet you didn't. My presence in London worried you fearfully. Or else you have a conscience! What does a conscience feel like, Straws? Or perhaps you were nervous, scared, unable to make up your mind? Anyhow, you used your man as a sort of intermediate, and without showing your hand you managed to materially improve my position. That was your conscience. Good! Perhaps you were not sleeping well o' nights?

"Now, it was perfectly clear to me that you believed I was ignorant of the fact that I had been left a fine property. I had presumably dived into the underworld, had cut myself off from all who knew me, from old associations—had become a dead man, in short. You argued that the truth of my good fortune had not drifted down to me. You must have argued on those lines, because otherwise you would have expected me round early to do a little blackmailing. But I have never got quite down to blackmail.

"In the meantime you regarded yourself enjoying all these good things which you had no real right to handle. 'I guess you said, 'I can adjust this affair; I can pass on the property all right, all right; but shall I, who am doing only good things with it, educating my children, putting my name to permanent contributions, hand it over to a criminal to waste? Besides which, the handing-over process will send this poor devil head-first into a long imprisonment.'

"This was the sort of sop you spooned to yourself. Suddenly the worst happens; the bomb bursts; your felon tears off his mask. Here he is, sitting in your chair, before your fire—pardon, in *his* chair, before *his* fire."

To all this Filson Straws had listened in stillness and in silence. Each rising word he crushed back; the smallest bodily movement he controlled. What sort of duel was this he was called upon to face? The thrill and the terror of it demanded all the composure he could muster. He was silent for a long time, and then he said:—

"I will not question your general statement of the case. You have, of course, something further to say."

"Everything. I have spent hours, days, weeks in considering whether it would be worth while for me to face the music; to declare myself Harney Legree, very much alive; to swallow all the gruel I shall receive, and then to claim—all this. Now, I can make up my mind pretty smartly in most things, but the devil take me if I can come to a lasting decision in this! It isn't that I mind shoving you out. Good Lord, no! And the prospect of becoming a man of comfortable means is a live prospect, with a good big kick in it. Still, they'd send me up the river in the States for a tidy long term of years before I could enjoy what would come after. That would be exceedingly unpleasant. I reckon I should get seven years of prison." He turned sociably to his listener. "Do you think they'd serve me out more than seven?"

"Possibly."

"Thank you for nothing. Suppose we call it ten. Now I don't want to do ten years. I shouldn't be so young when I came out. And then there's a girl across the Atlantic I want to marry. I should lose her. And she counts a good deal in this transaction. In fact, it was thinking so much of her lately that made me decide to come to you and have a heart-to-heart talk."

"You mean to make a proposition. I have been waiting for it."

"Give me a couple of thousand pounds and I'll let you alone to enjoy the rest."

"I refuse."

"Fifteen hundred, then?"

"Certainly not."

"A thousand—the limit, mind?"

"I will not give you fifty."

"What? Not out of my own estate?"

"Not out of your own estate."

"But—man alive! I can claim the whole boiling, if I choose."

"Claim it."

"Ah, I see your drift, Straws! You think I cannot prove it?"

"I am certain you can. Certainly I should not combat your claim. I will even help it, if that be necessary."

At that Legree sat up and stared at the other. The eyes of the two men met, and for a full minute they just looked at each other in a profound silence. Legree grunted and leaned forward to knock the ashes from his pipe. Very slowly and meditatively he reloaded the bowl. It was a pause in the duel, both opponents falling back with lowered points.

"Obviously you don't trust me," said Harney.

"Put yourself in my place," was the quiet answer.

"But I assure you that when I ask for a thousand pounds I am very much in earnest."

"That I believe."

"Well, having that amount, I shall be entirely satisfied, and you will never be troubled by me again. Hang it, man, this is not in the nature of blackmail! I am asking for a bit of my own—and a beggarly trifle at that."

For the first time Filson Straws shifted his position. He wheeled his chair round so that he faced his desk, resting his arms upon it and steadfastly regarding Legree.

"You mean that," he responded, quietly, "you *will* be satisfied—*for the present*. But as sure as you are sitting there the time will come when you will want a bigger handful. The knowledge that all this is yours will never let go of your brain. And then you will come for

more. I know it. In a fashion I allow that this is not pure blackmail; but then, in another fashion, it is. You will want a second thousand, then a third, and so on. You will bleed me slowly and surely."

"Of what is not yours!" cut in Legree.

"Admitted. I never denied that. But I strongly object to being bled through years and years of my life. It will lead to an intolerable situation which will inevitably destroy my peace of mind, which will strike at the happiness of my wife and children, which will end in utter disaster. Remember, also, that I should possibly be acting illegally in helping you—a wanted man; yet that scruple would not necessarily govern me, since your wrong was not against the laws of this country. But to talk of that is to waste time."

Harney Legree gripped the arms of his chair. Into his eyes came a fierce, a searing glare. He half rose, then allowed himself to sink back, slowly. The heat of sudden fury faded. He even laughed softly.

"All right," said he, coolly. "This refusal makes up my mind for me. I will go through the fire and enjoy my fortune later."

Straws, pale as death, made no response.

"Do you think I'm afraid?" flashed Legree.

Filson was still silent.

"Answer, curse you!"

"Candidly, I think you are. Understand, however, if you can, that I do not want to build upon your fear."

"You liar, Straws! But I'll make you disgorge! Hanged if I let you keep a mouldy penny!"

There was no answer.

"If you are so confoundedly virtuous, why didn't you give me to justice when you saw me in England, alive?"

"Pardon, I have not pleaded virtue."

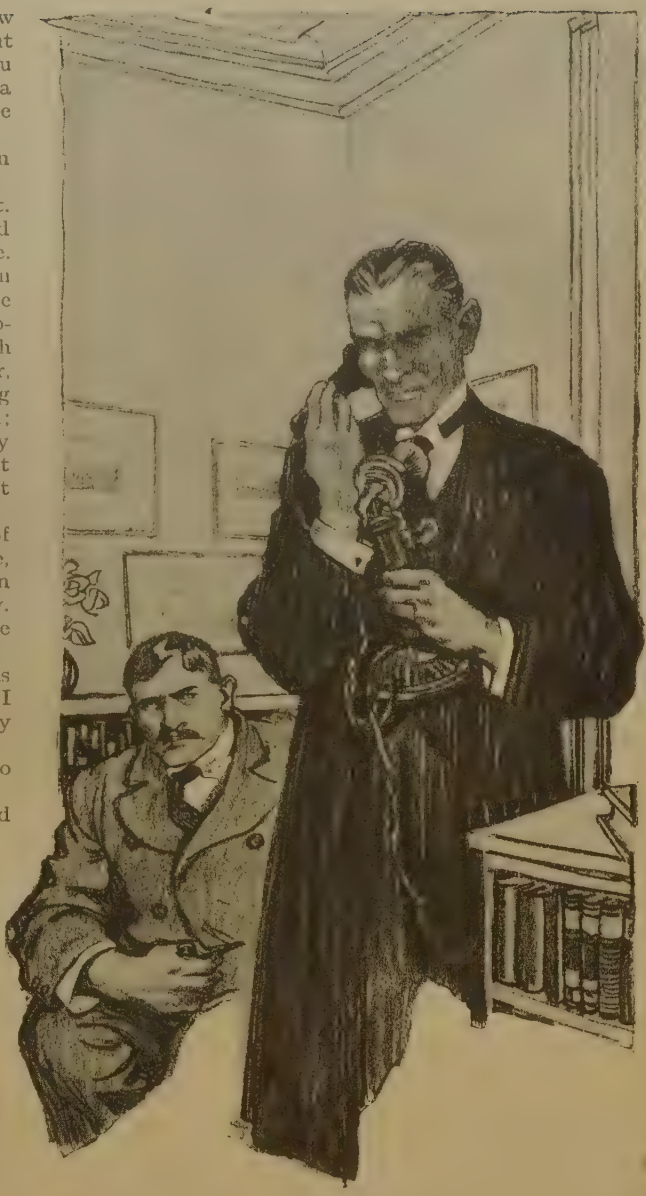
"Or perhaps—yes, I see the card up your sleeve," exclaimed Harney. "You fancy that the will, in the special circumstances, will be quashed. You imagine that my crime and what will follow will oust me from my right!'

"Why should it? I have yet to learn that is the law. You will have purged your offence."

"Then I will sell you my claim. I'll let you buy, for a thousand pounds, all that is due to me."

"You cannot, without disclosing yourself."

"Oh, curse you and your cold-blooded reasons! I wonder how long it would have taken you to give me away if it hadn't meant the loss of a fortune to you?"



"'GIVE ME THE POLICE STATION,' SAID HE, CURTLY."

Straws uttered a long and shuddering sigh. "That simple cutting of the rope is the only way," he answered, despondingly. "We may talk and talk, but undo this knot we never shall."

"Hear him!" cried Legree. "Why didn't you save yourself these pangs by communicating with the police?"

Stung to the quick Straws sprang from his chair, and leaning towards Harney, his palms upon the table, he said, with intense earnestness:—

"Behind your back I couldn't. But I'll do it now, if you give me permission. Give me that, and I'll end, for both of us, this intolerable situation."

"Heroic!" snarled the other.

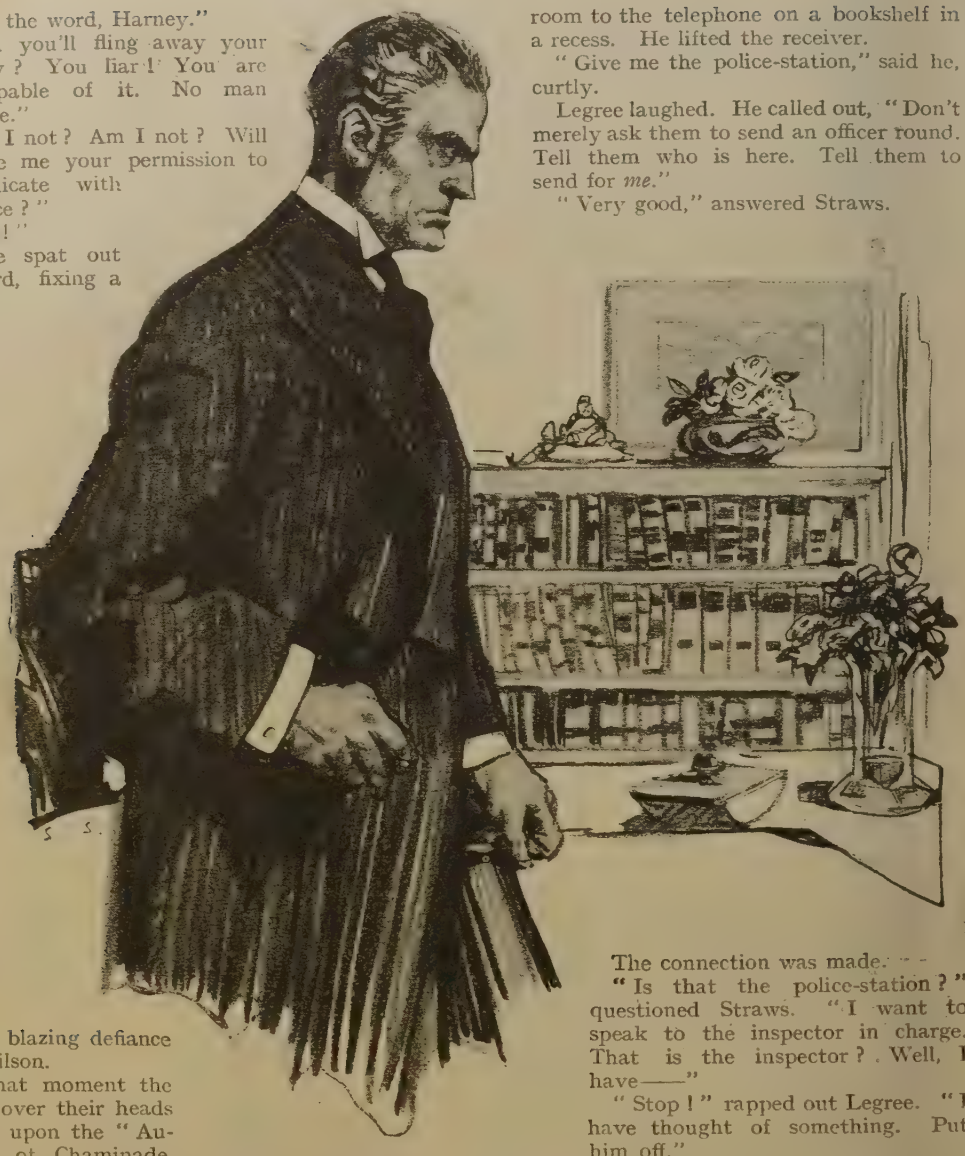
"Say the word, Harney."

"And you'll fling away your property? You liar! You are not capable of it. No man would be."

"Am I not? Am I not? Will you give me your permission to communicate with the police?"

"Yes!"

Legree spat out the word, fixing a look of blazing defiance upon Filson.



At that moment the pianist over their heads entered upon the "Autumn" of Chaminade. Involuntarily both men listened. Down upon their excited passion floated the rising moan of the after-summer gale, the scurry of the yellowed leaves, the lament of the trees, and that wild, bizarre chorus of bereavement.

And all this insurgence of sound beat upon Filson's heart, and he felt a dew break upon his forehead, upon his hands, and for an instant things rocked this and that way before his eyes. This moment he stood a man of means, with full appreciation of all that that meant. His son's career was dawning full of promise; his wife and daughter as happy as they were unconscious of the sword impending. Ten seconds later—no more, and——

The jibing voice whipped him again.

"You liar!" repeated Harney.

Straws straightened himself. He gave the other a single glance, then stepped across the room to the telephone on a bookshelf in a recess. He lifted the receiver.

"Give me the police-station," said he, curtly.

Legree laughed. He called out, "Don't merely ask them to send an officer round. Tell them who is here. Tell them to send for *me*."

"Very good," answered Straws.

The connection was made.

"Is that the police-station?" questioned Straws. "I want to speak to the inspector in charge. That is the inspector? Well, I have——"

"Stop!" rapped out Legree. "I have thought of something. Put him off."

Straws handled the situation with presence of mind. He continued: "Will you be on duty for an hour, inspector? I should like to come round and see you about a certain matter. Many thanks."

He hung up the receiver, not easily, for in his shaking grip it rattled against the clips. He turned and resumed his seat by the table.

Harney stood in front of the fire, his hands clasped behind him, puffing very composedly at his short briar. A moment ago he had been on the brink of a precipice ten years deep; yet it did not appear to have jarred his nerve. He said, with a laugh:—

"I take back the 'liar,' Straws. You meant to do it, and I didn't think it possible. You're game, I admit. Mind you, I think you are a fool, but you are not without pluck."

Filson merely replied by a curious glance at

the other's easy attitude. Harney went on, in growing good humour :—

"By now we have taken each other's measure."

"You have got mine," answered Straws, with indifference.

"By James, I have! And I mean to return the compliment. Just now I named a thousand pounds as my rock-bottom limit. I'll knock a chunk off even that. I'll call it seven hundred."

"I cannot agree."

"Five hundred, then?"

"You are wasting your time."

"Oh, be hanged to your obstinacy!" growled Harney. He turned and spat into the fire. A long silence ensued, broken only by a gurgling sound from Legree's over-heated pipe.

"Is it possible," continued the visitor, reflectively, "that it is the cash you are considering? Is it possible that you, having all, cannot bear to part even with that beggarly fraction?"

"You are wrong there. We are going round and round in a circle," answered Straws, very wearisomely.

"HE PICKED UP THE SHEET OF BLOTTING-PAPER. 'I'M A LUCKY SWINE,' HE LAUGHED. 'I'M FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS RICHER THAN WHEN I CAME IN.'"

"It is simply that you are afraid of me?"

"It is simply that I steadfastly decline to admit the thin end of a blackmailing wedge."

"But I am not a blackmailer. I abhor that sort of crawler as much as you do. Do the handsome thing by me and you shall not see my pretty face again this side of the doom-crack. That I swear."

"And again I answer that I cannot accept your word."

"But see how hard it is on me!"

"That I admit. I am in your shoes here, Harney, but what can I do? It is for you to act. The remedy is in your own hands. I have shown you that I do not shrink, but you—but you——"

"Ah, you think I am less plucky in the matter than you?"

Filson wiped his pallid forehead.

"Because I interrupted your 'phone-call you put it down to cowardice? Now, I am going to show you, my son, that it was nothing so yellow. We will conduct this business like sportsmen. What is wanted to solve the riddle is a little respect for each other. By Jove, that is it! Look you, Straws, if you could trust me as I want you to, would you really give me a thousand pounds out of the estate?"

"No. I would be more just. I would give you five thousand," was the instant rejoinder.

"You would?" flashed Legree.

"Yes, I would. It would be a somewhat crooked arrangement, but the nature of the case is so extraordinary. I am enjoying what is not my own, yet I cannot end it without putting you in a prison."

Legree put his pipe down upon the mantelpiece. "Good!" said he, brusquely. "We have now arrived at the idea which came to me when you were 'phoning the inspector. I am bound to say I admired your display of grit, and I want to compel a like compliment from you without absolutely damning myself for sure. You shall see I am as earnest and consistent as you. Give me a sheet of

writing-paper and an envelope, and a stamp for postage."

Full of wonder and perplexity, Straws obeyed. The other jerked a chair to the table and for a couple of minutes was busy with a pen. When he had finished he read out, aloud, as follows :—

"'To the Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard. —This is to inform you that the writer of this note is George Harney Legree, wanted in the United States of America for a bank robbery committed in Indiana three years back, and wrongly believed to be dead. His address is No. 22, Harkaby Street, Shoreditch, known there as William Jason.'"

Harney folded and placed this message in an envelope, which he directed and sealed, and pushed forward for Straws to see. He continued, coolly :—

"If Scotland Yard gets this it will know what steps to take. I shall not run away from that address, which you know is mine ; but it would not help me to bolt, for they would soon get after me. Now, I want you, Straws, to write me a cheque for five thousand pounds. You probably haven't that much at your bank, on your running account, but you can date it ahead for a few days, during which time you can place the cash ready for me to withdraw. To say that I trust you is to pay you an idle compliment. Please put the slip in an envelope like this and address it to my poor but honest residence at Harkaby Street."

For half a minute Filson hesitated, frowning and perplexed. Then he obeyed. Legree took both addressed and sealed envelopes and placed them side by side on top of the bookcase by the side of the telephone. He then laid a sheet of blotting-paper upon the two envelopes. After this he went back to his pipe.

"Here it all is," said he, curtly. "Press your bell and call your man. Tell him to lift the paper, take up one of the two letters underneath, without asking a single question, and to go straight across the road to the pillar-box at the corner—and *drop it in*. You get me ?"

"I—I imagine that I do," murmured Filson, very white.

"Good, man. You perceive that I am not a whit more afraid than you are. It is only that I hate to go to jail for ten years if the matter between us can be arranged otherwise. But if it can't be arranged otherwise, then I'll go to prison—and that is my ultimate, last, and final word ! My scheme gives you a chance, and it gives me an equal chance. Nothing but it will show you how much in earnest I am, and yet leave open a way out for us both. If you regard it as the method of a blackmailer, as the idea of one who will come again and again to bleed you white, then tear up both cheque and letter. If not, call your man."

And Harney reloaded his pipe with care and lighted it with still more care.

Filson Straws touched the button of an electric bell.

James appeared five seconds later.

"James," said Straws, in a tone which he endeavoured in vain to absolutely control, "there is a sheet of blotting-paper by the side of the 'phone."

"Yes, sir."

"There are two letters underneath it."

"Yes, sir."

"Please take one of them—whichever one you like, without asking questions. Take it instantly to the pillar-box across the road and drop it in. You perfectly understand me, James ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then do as I tell you."

Without a moment of hesitation the well-trained servant stepped to the bookcase. The action brought his back between him and the others. He lifted the covering blotting-paper, picked up one of the envelopes, put back the blotting-paper over the other, and went out, closing the door softly.

Straws pulled at his collar. Excitement was touching his heart. Harney blew an immense cloud. Both men went slowly to a window overlooking the street. Straws drew the blind aside. They looked down at the human flow, and in a few moments they saw James, hatless, crossing the road. He stopped at the pillar-box at the corner ; he dropped in the letter.

"Did you think I'd get cold feet at the last second ?" laughed Legree.

Straws turned and stared at the bookcase. "You look," he whispered, huskily.

"As you will," answered the other, easily.

He stepped across the room and picked up the sheet of blotting-paper.

"I'm a lucky swine," he laughed. "I'm five thousand pounds richer than when I came in !"

He handed the letter to the police to Filson, who tore it across and across and dropped it into the fire.

"Good-bye, Straws," said Legree. "I'm going to marry my girl, who is worth all the rest of the money."

He held out his hand, and Filson put his into it.

"Good-bye, Harney," said he, tremulously.

When Straws found himself alone he looked round vacantly, absently. He was dazed. What an ordeal it had been ! He thought of the inspector at the local police-station, who was waiting. Well, he might wait ! Mechanically he moved towards his dead cigar, which was resting on a groove in the brass ash-tray on his table, and mechanically he applied a light to it.

It tasted stale, spent, exhausted ; but Straws did not notice that detail, for he inhaled, deeply, its pungent smoke which seemed to him, in his rapture of relief, like those spicy breezes which "waft o'er Ceylon's isle."

NEW DISCOVERIES IN NATURAL HISTORY.

Caterpillars that Barricade Themselves and "Gas" Their Enemies.

By JOHN J. WARD, F.E.S.

With Photographs by the Author.

I. LARVA OF GOOSEBERRY SAW-FLY SLIGHTLY ENLARGED. INSET IS THE SAW-FLY NATURAL SIZE.

WE have to realize that an insect does not think; indeed, all its actions are purely instinctive—the outcome of what has proved valuable to it in the course of its evolution throughout time, by protecting it from, or deceiving, its enemies, or providing it more readily with food, its descendants inheriting and perfecting the habit to a greater complexity.

Consequently, we meet with most striking instances of what at first glance look like cleverly-devised schemes which astonish us by their subtlety. I have just been investigating such an instance in the case of a saw-fly larva, and a new and most curious Nature-story those investigations provide.

Saw-flies are not familiar insects to the average person, but in Fig. 1 is shown a common species, both in the caterpillar and the fully-developed stages, the former being very destructive to the foliage of gooseberry bushes. Saw-fly larvæ may be distinguished from butterfly or moth caterpillars by their curled-up tail-end and their greater number of legs—about ten pairs, against the eight or less of a butterfly or moth larva. There are numerous species, and their habits are varied and astonishing.

The species the caterpillar of which I now desire to call attention to has no common name, but is known to recent entomological science as *Lygæonematus compressicornis*, and, on account of the curious habit, here described, of this larva, we may give it a popular name and call it the palisade saw-fly.

It feeds on the leaves of the black poplar, its method of feeding being most extraordinary. Before commencing on a leaf it proceeds to the leaf-stalk, and there secretes some spots of frothy saliva, raising its head in each case until the spot becomes stretched into a short thread, and then suddenly snapping it off. Each little pillar of saliva then stands erect like a hair on the leaf-stalk, but remaining flexible and viscid.

It then moves up the leaf-stalk to the green part, on which it commences to feed. Starting at the edge it rapidly bites its way into the leaf, and when a piece is eaten away it proceeds to deposit more saliva palisades around, and for some distance beyond, that area, both on the upper and the under side of the leaf.

The larva is thus enclosed in a barricade on each side of the leaf, and there it comfortably settles down to feed. Later on it extends its defence in accordance with the feeding-space it may require, eating up and re-using its saliva palisades, but often leaving the bases of them in vulnerable parts, as shown in Fig. 2.

2. THE CATERPILLAR EATS UP ALL BUT THE BASES OF ITS OLD PALISADES—LEAVING THE REMNANTS, WHICH SERVE TO "GAS" APPROACHING ENEMIES, AND BUILDING NEW PILLARS WHERE IT IS FEEDING

That it is a defence is perfectly obvious—but a defence against what? That is a question which apparently has never been answered. I am indebted to the Rev. F. D. Morice, who has kindly placed in my way all the available knowledge recorded at the British Natural History Museum, South Kensington, regarding this insect, and so far no explanation of the extraordinary and unique habits of this larva has been offered. In 1862 the caterpillar and its method of building its barricade were described in the *Zoologist*, and, recently, the Rev. F. D. Morice has himself described the larva

before the Entomological Society of London; but no evidence has so far been adduced in explanation of the use of its curious defence.

Now, it is quite a common device amongst plants to produce rows and groups of hairs on their stems and leaves, and especially in the area of their flowers, to keep back creeping insects, the most troublesome of which are ants—insects which steal the honey of the flowers without assisting in their pollination.

With these facts in mind, I obtained some common brown ants from my garden-path, one of which I conducted to the edge of the leaf on which the saw-fly larva was barricaded. The ant, in its excitement, ran across the surface of the leaf and went headlong into one of the defensive pillars, which broke away and stuck on the ant's head. The ant immediately commenced to struggle, and after some considerable difficulty succeeded in freeing itself from its were "gassed" the moment they touched one of the defence posts.

Furthermore, the larva always rests on the edge of the part of the leaf where it is feeding, with its tail curled to one side. The moment it is touched it performs a vanishing trick by instantly disappearing through the hole to the opposite side, only holding on to the edge by its tiny claws, but giving the impression of having fallen to the ground, an action which would be likely to deceive an ant. All the evidence, therefore, seems distinctly to suggest that this curious defence is a protection against ants.

A notably queer example of a moth larva's work is shown in Fig. 3, where a chestnut leaf is seen bearing a number of conspicuous white spots. In each of these areas a larva has mined out the green part of the leaf between the upper and lower epidermal, or skin, tissues. The

3. THE UPPER SIDE OF THE CHESTNUT LEAF.

4. THE LEAF SHOWN IN FIG. 3 ILLUMINATED FROM BEHIND, SHOWING THE TINY CATERPILLAR IN EACH PALE-COLOURED AREA.

encumbrance. But it had evidently got something more than a mere fright, for it proceeded to brush its face furiously with its forelegs, and appeared to sneeze (if ants can sneeze) continually. Then it brought the end of its abdomen under its legs to its fore-parts and lowered its head, taking its tail-end into its mouth-parts, and held itself in that extraordinary position rolled up like a ball, but still standing on its legs. Probably it was secreting some formic acid to neutralize the effects of what it had received from the saw-fly's defence.

After some minutes it seemed to revive somewhat, and it then moved carefully about the leaf, but the moment it approached even a remaining stump of one of the saw-fly's palisades it instantly backed; apparently if could smell them at a distance away and was now fully on the alert.

I experimented with other ants in a similar way. In every instance the individual ants

caterpillar is very tiny, and after eating out an area such as is shown in the photograph it is full fed. It then spins a little silken disc between the leaf-skins to cover its body. In Fig. 4 the same leaf is shown illuminated with a brilliant light behind it, revealing the caterpillars *in situ* between the tissues of the leaf.

In due course the leaf falls and decays, when the silken discs eventually become detached, and should they fall in unfavourable positions—where, for instance, they get too much sunlight and are likely to become dry—the larva within is able to pull at its silken lining, and so turn over the light bit of leaf-skins to which it is attached, and in that way it slowly travels to a more favourable position for its winter resting-place. This species attacking the chestnut leaf does not appear to have been recorded at the British Natural History Museum, and I hope to be able to develop the fly to identify it, as it may possibly prove a new species.

Famous Tricks of Famous Conjurers.

By DAVID DEVANT.

THE oldest trick in the world is known to conjurers as the "cups and balls."

The conjurer has three small cups, usually made of brass, and three small cork balls, about the size of a filbert. All sorts of things happen with these simple articles. The conjurer can make a ball pass invisibly through the top of each cup, or he can make all three balls go invisibly under one cup, or he can make the balls pass out invisibly from one cup to another, and so on.

There is practically no limit to the effects which the conjurer can produce with three cups and three balls, and as the trick is one of pure sleight of hand it has always been admired alike by magicians and the public.

"THERE IS PRACTICALLY NO LIMIT TO THE EFFECTS WHICH THE CONJURER CAN PRODUCE WITH THREE CUPS AND THREE BALLS."

Who are the famous magicians who have done this trick? Well, they are mostly anonymous, for they have performed on racecourses. The trick is peculiarly suited to the racecourse conjurer, for it can be done in the centre of the audience and no preparation is needed.

The foundations of magic are laid in this one little trick, and if I were writing for magicians I could prove the truth of that statement. For many years dishonest men have made a precarious living by this one trick alone, for the "cups and balls" was the ancestor of the more familiar "three thimbles and a pea" swindle.

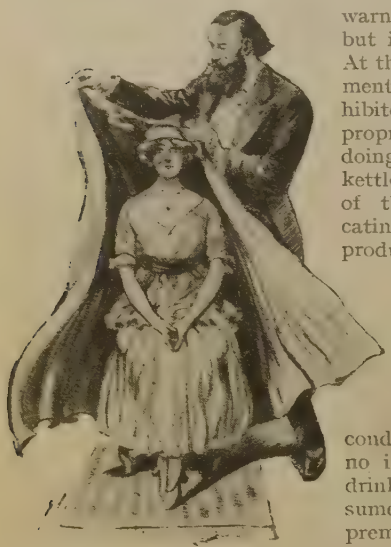
There is but one drawback to this fine old trick: its effect is lost in a large room; the audience must be close to the conjurer's table. The racecourse conjurer has his audience standing up near him—the right position for a spectator who would appreciate the trick properly.

One of the most popular tricks of modern times has been "The Magic Kettle." It created quite a sensation a few years ago, but I fancy that most magicians were rather displeased with it, for it was more of a scientific toy than a trick. The chief effect consisted in making the kettle boil water when it was standing on a block of ice.

Magic kettles being all the rage, I, naturally, had to have one; but I was determined that my magic kettle should be a little different from anybody else's. Therefore I borrowed an idea from a very old trick—the inexhaustible bottle: a bottle from which the conjurer can pour any drink asked for by the audience. In place of the bottle I used a kettle, and from it I poured spirits, wines, liqueurs, and milk and water (in separate glasses; my milk was the real thing).

"IT WAS WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY THAT THE AUDIENCES WERE PREVENTED FROM MOBBING ME AND THE KETTLE AS I RUSHED ABOUT POURING OUT ANY DRINK I WAS ASKED FOR."

I nearly had a terrific failure with the magic kettle. The trick itself never failed me, but it was just a little too good for one audience. The trouble occurred at Leicester. The trick had been well advertised all over the town, and a large balloon, in the form of an elephant, floated over the Temperance Hall, in which I was to perform. The name of the hall ought to have been a warning to me, but it was not. At the last moment I was prohibited by the proprietors from doing the magic kettle because of the intoxicating drinks it produced. It appeared that the man who built the hall had given it on the condition that no intoxicating drinks were consumed on the premises, and there was a clause in my agreement telling me of this condition, but I had overlooked it.



"'THE VANISHING LADY,' AT ONE TIME A VERY POPULAR ILLUSION."

What was to be done? I could not possibly break faith with the public, for the kettle was the leading item in my programme. I hurriedly decided to make the kettle a total abstainer for the time being and to cause it to produce only temperance drinks: tea, coffee, cocoa, milk, lemonade. Some people marvelled at the idea of having hot lemonade served to them; but I did not, for I knew that it was beyond the powers of my trusty kettle to serve a hot drink one moment and an iced drink the next, and so on.

Now for the sequel to that story. I have performed only twice out of England, and on both occasions in Vienna. During my second visit to Vienna—twenty-five years after the first—I wanted to do the kettle trick, but I found that there was such a very large variety of non-temperance drinks in Vienna that I could not possibly remember them all. To offer to produce any drink named by the audience was out of the question altogether. So I fell back on the old idea of making the kettle a total abstainer, and found to my joy that hot lemonade was a regular drink in Vienna. The audiences thought that I had paid them a compliment by remembering that they liked their lemonade hot, and it was with great difficulty that the audiences were prevented from mobbing me and the kettle as I rushed about the hall pouring out any drink I was asked for. Never has the kettle made a bigger success than it made in Vienna, and I take this opportunity of thanking the proprietors of the Temperance Hall, Leicester.

"The Vanishing Lady" was at one time a very popular illusion. It was invented by a brilliant magician, Buatier De Kolta, and was shown by him for the first time in Paris.

The performer came forward with a newspaper, which he spread out on the stage. On the paper he placed a chair. A lady sat on the chair. The performer covered her with a silk shawl. Go! She disappeared.

The trick was a great improvement on anything that had been done before De Kolta's time. He had a wholesome scorn of cabinets and other cumbersome pieces of apparatus. "I can do anything," he once said to me, "if I am allowed to put up a bedstead on the stage"; and I agreed with him that the day of cabinets and other things which were so obviously tricks was over.

Some time after De Kolta's death I tried to go one better than "The Vanishing Lady." I wanted to make the lady vanish without covering her up, and after many experiments I produced "The Mascot Moth." A lady took the part of the moth. On a fully lighted stage, without covering the lady, I just picked her up in my arms and she disappeared.

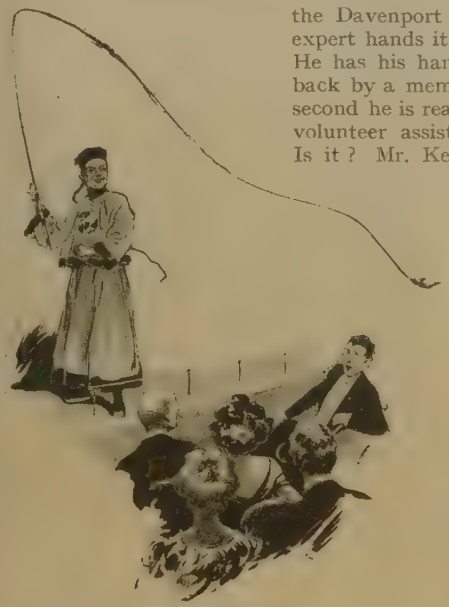
Buatier De Kolta invented several tricks which have made the name of more than one magician. One of the tricks was "The Disappearing Birdcage." The cage, with a bird inside it, disappeared from the inventor's hands. Another of his famous tricks was the production of vast quantities of paper flowers from a sheet of paper which he twisted up into a cone-shaped bag. This trick baffled conjurers for a long time, but one evening a draught on the stage caught one of the flowers and blew it into the orchestra. The secret of the trick was given away, and it is now known to every conjurer.

The "bullet-catching trick" will be fresh in the minds of my readers, for it was by performing that trick that Chung Ling Soo, the famous

THE "BULLET-CATCHING TRICK," AS PERFORMED BY CHUNG LING SOO.

Chinese magician—an Englishman off the stage—recently met his death. He was warned over and over again by his friends against doing that trick, and he must have known that at least half-a-dozen conjurers have been killed by doing the same trick. A bullet, marked by the audience, is fired at the magician, who catches it between his teeth. Soo used a plate for the purpose. The trick is always sensational and effective.

Curiously enough, Soo made his name in this country with a trick of a totally different kind—the "fishing rod." He would stand in the centre of the stage with a rod and line in his hand and make a cast into the auditorium. Suddenly the audience would be startled to see a fish caught on the end of the line over their heads. Soo would then take in the line, remove the fish, drop it into a glass bowl of water, and everybody could see it swimming about—quite happy and comfortable. The trick was invented by an amateur conjurer. Professional magicians are indebted to amateurs for several good tricks. Amateurs seldom realize the effectiveness of a trick until they see it performed by a professional, who, of course, makes every point tell.



"SUDDENLY THE AUDIENCE WOULD BE STARTLED TO SEE A FISH CAUGHT ON THE END OF THE LINE OVER THEIR HEADS."

Conjurers are also indebted for some of their tricks to the bogus spiritualists. Dr. Slade, the famous medium, provided conjurers with an excellent slate trick, but the conjurers simplified his method. The conjurer shows a clean slate and produces on it any writing—figures or words—which he requires.

The "spiritualists" have one very effective trick which they use to prove the presence of spirits. The medium allows someone to tie one end of a cord round his wrist in any way he pleases and to seal the knots. Having done this, the assistant holds the other end of the cord in his hand. The lights are lowered for a few moments; when they are turned up the assistant sees a knot in the middle of the cord. How does the knot get there? One end is tied tightly round the medium's wrist, the assistant holds the other end. The knot *must* be spirit-tied. But it never is!

The drawing-room performer of to-day has improved on that trick. He will have a piece of string tied tightly round both his wrists with about a yard of string between them. The knots may be sealed. The conjurer borrows a ring and retires behind a screen for a moment. When he emerges the audience see that the ring is not only on the string but tied on it, and the knots on the wrists have not been tampered with. No, it is not done by spiritualism! And the knots are perfectly fair, including the knot that ties the ring in its place.

The Davenport Brothers, the famous mediums, made the name of more than one conjurer, for they originated some excellent rope-tying tricks. I rather fancy that my friend Mr. Harry Kellar, America's most famous magician, owes his celebrated "Kellar tie" to an idea of the Davenport Brothers. In Mr. Kellar's expert hands it is a most mystifying trick. He has his hands tied together behind his back by a member of the audience. In a second he is ready to shake hands with his volunteer assistant, for his hand is free. Is it? Mr. Kellar turns round instantly, and shows his hands still tied tightly together in their original position. Then, just as the assistant is wondering if "seeing is believing" he is startled by being patted on the back by Mr. Kellar. He looks round. Mr. Kellar's hands are still tied behind his back. Let me add that this bald description does not do justice to the splendid effect Mr. Kellar produces with his "tie," for which every magician has a profound admiration.

A few good tricks have come to us from India. The Indian conjurers content themselves with doing a few good tricks and doing them very well, a fact which amateur conjurers should remember, but never will!

I regard the famous Indian rope trick as a myth. I do not believe that any conjurer ever stood in the open air, threw up a rope, made it rigid in that position, and then caused a boy to climb up the rope and disappear at the top of it. It is said that the Indian performer of this trick hypnotizes his audience, but I am an unbeliever in that explanation.

The best of all Indian tricks, to my mind, is the mango-tree trick. The tree is made to grow from a seed planted in the ground, and eventually the first shoot grows into a large tree—by means of a series of very clever substitutions. This trick is the forerunner of the orange-tree trick performed by many European conjurers. The tree puts forth blossoms, which develop into fruit in front of the audience. Robert Houdin, the famous French conjurer, claimed this trick as his invention, but my friend, Mr. Harry Houdini, the famous "handcuff king," shows clearly enough in his book, "The Unmasking of Robert Houdin," that the trick was invented in the eighteenth century by Christopher Pinchbeck, an Englishman.

The conjurer who sits down to invent a new

trick is seldom successful in thinking of an entirely new effect. The most he can hope to do, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, is to eliminate some of the crudities of an old trick and bring it up to modern requirements.

For example, many years ago there was a little trick, obviously very mechanical, in which differently coloured liquids, mixed together, were made to separate themselves magically and reappear in their original places. My version of the trick is as follows.

I have three assistants on the stage. Each holds a large glass goblet. Into one goblet I pour some milk; into another some wine. The two liquids are then poured from the goblets into the third goblet. I hold a flag, on a stick, in front of this goblet for half a second. Then the flag disappears from the stick and is taken at once from the goblet in which the wine and milk were mixed, and the wine and milk separate and return to their two goblets, which are not covered at any time in the trick. In one sense I was the inventor, for the trick had never been done before in that form; in another sense I was not the inventor, for the idea of magically separating two liquids was not mine.

One little trick has been doubly famous. The inventor of it was Verbeck, a very clever conjurer who performed in London in the 'eighties. He used a wedding-ring, borrowed from the audience, and one of his own programmes for the trick. This is one of the tricks by which my friend, the late Charles Bertram, will always be remembered. In place of the ring Bertram used a shilling, borrowed from the audience, and in place of a programme the cover of a copy of *Tit-Bits*. Having persuaded someone from the audience to help him in the trick, Bertram would tear the cover of *Tit-Bits* in halves, hold one in his hand, and ask his volunteer assistant to put the shilling on the paper.

Bertram then rolled the shilling in the paper and gave the parcel to his assistant, together with a piece of sealing-wax. The assistant was asked to touch the back of his hand with the sealing-wax and open the parcel. The paper had been converted into a large envelope, closely sealed. From this two more sealed envelopes were taken. The innermost one contained the shilling.

Suggesting that if he did the trick again his assistant would see how it was done, Bertram repeated the performance with the remaining half of the cover of *Tit-Bits*. Finally, he would take all six envelopes and hand them to his assistant with the assurance that if he looked at them closely he would see exactly how the trick was done. The assistant would take the parcel and open it. The six envelopes had been restored to their original state—the cover of *Tit-Bits*.

"'THE CHINESE RINGS'—IN WHICH A NUMBER OF SOLID METAL RINGS, EXAMINED BY THE AUDIENCE, BECOME LINKED AND UNLINKED WHEN THE CONJURER HANDLES THEM—IS STILL ONE OF THE BEST TRICKS WE HAVE."

This was one of Bertram's best tricks, and he certainly improved on the trick as it was originally invented.

Some excellent tricks have come to us from the Chinese. The trick known as "The Chinese Rings"—in which a number of solid metal rings, examined by the audience, become linked and unlinked when the conjurer handles them—is still one of the best tricks we have. Another fine old Chinese trick is the magical production of a number of glass bowls full of water, with fish swimming in them. The suspension of a person in mid-air is a very old Eastern trick. These three tricks, and several others from the East, have been performed by generations of conjurers all over the world, and audiences are still interested in them.

Second sight is a more modern trick. It really consists in the performer secretly transmitting a message to his assistant. Some of the early methods of bringing about this mystery would hardly pass muster to-day, but in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when Pinetti performed the trick in London, a magician's labours were a little less arduous than they are now. Robert Heller, an Englishman who performed in the middle of the nineteenth century, achieved much fame with this trick, and yet the Zancigs made a new trick of it when they performed a few years ago at the Alhambra.

Automata have always had a great fascination for the public—and conjurers.

A very famous automaton was known as "The Pastry-Cook of the Palais Royal." A figure of the pastry-cook would emerge from the model of a confectioner's shop, receive the orders of the audience for any kind of sweetmeat or pastry, and then go inside and execute them. Houdini, in the book I have already mentioned, traces this trick back to 1796, in which year it was presented by Haddock, an English performer, who used a model of a fruiterer's shop for the trick. The audience could ask for any fruit they liked.

There are countless other tricks which have been famous in their day and have helped to make conjurers famous. And when all is said and done some of the oldest tricks, performed by modern methods, remain the most popular alike with magicians and the public. I have not space even for their names.

WOMAN'S WIT.

By GEORGE HIBBARD.

Illustrated by Norah Schlegel.

BETTY ALLISON tripped along without a thought in her mind that could really be called a thought. She would, indeed, have denied energetically that there was a waking moment when she could be accused of being in such a state, for she was a very active, alert young person who was always doing something or planning to do something. Truth, however, compels the statement that at the moment she had not a distinct idea in her pretty head. She was merely serenely, carelessly happy.

The afternoon was a bright, cheery, and warm fulfilment of the promises of the early spring. The illustration which she had just finished at her own studio was certainly the best she had ever made, and would cause the art editor into whose office she would carry it the following day to open his eyes. She was going to the Escotts' flat to see that it was all right, the key of it having been left with her under particular injunction from her greatest friend, Irene Escott. Irene had anxiously informed her that she could not be entirely satisfied that the little maid, who only came in during the day when they were there, could be depended upon to inspect everything regularly when they were out of town. They had been away ever since Escott had given up his occupation as an engineer early in the winter to go to another city for confidential Government war service. There they had taken a flat, and there Irene had gone to be with him, as he would only be returning for a day at a time as his work called him. So Betty was going, as she had often gone before, to find if all was well. Moreover, she had agreed to meet there at five o'clock Captain Richard Burnham, whom she liked very much—well, perhaps liked a little more than very much. Well, she would see.

As she walked she noticed and felt, as she had before, the subtle metamorphosis of war. All the flags, the posters, the objects in the shop-windows, all made little differences which in the sum made a great difference. This brought her to what was a constant unhappiness for her. She was thinking now, and her mind was busy with the one care which troubled her. How could she do something to help in the war? What could she do? Certainly she belonged to half-a-dozen committees. Undoubtedly she was engaged in several forms of "war work." However, making "dressings," even selling Bonds, or, for that matter, learning how to take motor-cars apart, was nothing active as she understood it. She wanted something in which there was real danger and excitement and a chance for action, and what opportunity was there for that where everything was going on almost exactly as it had been going on when she had come there five years before to study art, and as it had been going on ever since? There was very little change in her own existence or the existence of her friends. People were doing other things—like the Escotts. Brothers and husbands—and Richard Burnhams—had gone off to camps. That and trying to get on with one's old clothes. No, she had no reason except for the head-lines of the papers to believe that there was a war. If she could be in France, where things were happening and where she longed to be, only they had told her that superfluous women were in the way!

She had walked onward and westward, and had come to the wide, empty street in which stood the building in which was the Escott flat. It had been a very broad, old dwelling-house, but the ground floor was now a business stationer's and printer's shop and the second storey had been transformed into the Escott flat. Above that was another flat, empty, as the sign "To Let" in a dusty window testified. Above that, as Betty knew, were store-rooms belonging to the tenants of the shop. The quietness and inexpensiveness had been in accord with the Escotts' wishes and means, and Betty approved entirely of the pretty nook they had made of it. The place was, indeed, almost more of a home for her than her own studio, where sometimes she had been very lonely.

She went up the narrow stairs by the side of the shop and reached the hall above. There was another stairway leading farther up, but Betty's light steps seemed to sound as steps sound in a house known to be empty. Momentarily she thought how curious it was that in a swarming, strident city she could be so isolated and in such silence. She opened the door of the Escott flat with the key she had and entered. Walking along the narrow, short little hall she reached the diminutive drawing-room.

Yes, a glance about assured her that everything was all right. All Irene Escott's wedding presents were in place exactly as she had left them. Betty had not expected anything else. However, Irene worried when she was away, and if she got any comfort in being informed that the mirror in the old Spanish frame—sent by Uncle Horace—was uncracked and hanging perfectly straight; that Cousin Clotilda's gift, the China rug, was carefully rolled up against the wall; that rich old Mrs. Munson's splendid present, the grand piano, was unscratched, she was delighted to write the facts to her.

What jolly good fun they had all had there! Little dinners, little suppers after the theatre. Richard Burnham had always been one of the party, and there she had first met him and—and——

Betty pushed aside the *portière* and passed from the drawing-room into the still smaller library. All was right there also. She returned to the drawing-room. Seating herself on the arm of a chair she gazed out at the blank windows of the houses opposite. Dick was coming presently, and she knew what he was going to say, only she did not know what she was going to say in answer—or was not quite sure—or, well—she had not said to herself that she knew what she was going to say exactly—well—she had not said it yet, anyhow——

She turned her head quickly.

Certainly someone was moving in the short hall. Could Dick have come already? She glanced at the clock. It manifestly had stopped. No, she could not expect him yet. But someone was in the hall. The distance from door to door was only half-a-dozen steps. Why did not he, she, it, they—come in?

She must have felt the strain of this question and the response to be made without knowing it, for the slight wait and suspense made her disproportionately nervous. She was ready to cry out sharply in interrogation when the person who had caused the slight disturbance entered. The appearance he presented, though, was so eminently usual, conventional, correct, that, coming after the brief nervous tension, she gave a slight hysterical laugh.

Then she stared with open eyes.

A man stood in the doorway. He was a young man, and he was a large young man, though the effect of largeness was produced rather by heaviness than by height. He had a large body and a large head, and a large face in which were singularly little eyes. Betty felt that they were at that moment looking at her with very sharp, startled attention. He was dressed in the height of the mode for late afternoon, and the effect produced was that of clothes worn by the man rather than that of a man wearing clothes. The Continental peculiarity which causes the wearer's garments to sit less easily on him, and with less appearance of unconsciousness, than on an Englishman was subtly evident. When he spoke his words came with perfect ease. There was, however, a faint, scarcely perceptible accent about them which was not the accent of any particular country or language, but carried a certain general suggestion of vague cosmopolitanism.

"I beg your pardon," he said, in quick composure. "I came to see my good friends the Escotts."

"Why," exclaimed Betty, starting up, "Baron von Hippe!"

The stout young man gazed at her with an expression of mild astonishment as he slowly opened his heavy, firmly-set mouth.

"I beg your pardon again," he said, blankly, "I——"

"I suppose, of course, that you don't remember me," interrupted Betty, eagerly. "It was eight years ago, when I was only fourteen, but I remember you very well on the steamer. I was crossing with my aunt, Mrs. Carnes, and you were devoted to her, but, of course, you never noticed or remember a little girl like me."

"Really, you are so—hasty," he said, with a smile which came and went very quickly. "It is I who am not remembered; or I cannot say that, for you have never seen me. I have not the honour to be of the name of the person you mention, and I never crossed eight years ago with your aunt, whom I never had the pleasure of knowing or seeing, and consequently not yourself either."

"Then who are you?" questioned Betty, still staring.

"I," he answered, "I am Maximilian Lopez, who knows, I think I may say, the Escotts very well."

"Oh!" exclaimed Betty, "*the* Mr. Lopez? Why, Mrs. Escott has written to me about you, She has written to me a great deal about you and most enthusiastically. You have been so very nice to them, and found so many pleasant things to do for them. But you must have known they were away."

"Oh, yes," he replied, after the slightest hesitation, placing his hat on one chair and seating himself in another, "but to-day Jack Escott was to be in town and I half expected to find him here."

"But usually," remonstrated Betty, "he only comes early in the week."

"This, you see, was different," he said, blandly. "And you are undoubtedly Miss Allison, of whom I have also heard much, and also most enthusiastically."

"Yes," she said, absently, "I am Elizabeth Allison," and she continued: "I was sure I had shut the door."

"Then, apparently, you are mistaken again, Miss Allison."

He paused, bowing gravely.

"The door was open. As I believed that no one would be here but Jack Escott, I made bold to enter as one would into a bachelor's quarters whom one knows well when one finds his door open. Miss Allison, I assure you that it is a very great pleasure to meet you at last."

Again he bowed and gave his listener to understand that he had been living only for that moment. Betty, sitting with her back to the

"HE STRAIGHTENED HIMSELF UP, GAVE A TWIRL TO HIS MOUSTACHE, AND ASSUMED THE AIR OF ONE RECEIVING A FITTING TRIBUTE OF ATTENTION AND ADMIRATION."

light, gazed at him without taking her eyes for a moment from him. He straightened himself up, gave a twirl to his moustache, and assumed the air of one receiving a fitting tribute of attention and admiration.

"So you thought you once saw someone who resembled me. Poor devil!"

He simpered consciously.

"Yes, wasn't it odd?" murmured Betty.

"However," he continued, "you must put up with poor Maximilian Lopez, whose only wish is to be of service to you."

"Since you know the Escotts so well, you must know Captain Burnham too—must have met him with them. Indeed, he has spoken to me about seeing you."

"Yes, indeed, I have seen Captain Burnham often and know him well."

"He is coming to meet me here at five o'clock——"

She checked herself suddenly, flushed and bit her lip, as if displeased with herself for what she had so quickly said. A shade of something passed across the face she was watching. There was the merest momentary change, and she might well have believed that she was mistaken in imagining that there was any at all.

"How delightful!" he exclaimed, quickly. "Captain Burnham is in town. I am so pleased. Ah, when the Escotts return and we are here all together we have been counting on having such—what do you call them—larks. We have planned to make a little merry in these sad times. And perhaps then you will be so good as to make one of us——" He stopped short. "Five o'clock. I wonder what time it is now?"

He glanced about and she saw his look.

"The clock has stopped," she said.

"It is a pity. Usually I carry a wrist-watch, but to-day I have it not on."

"I haven't a watch either," she said, and asked: "You have never been at the Escotts' flat before?"

"Alas! never."

"They have been away all the winter. I wonder what time it really is? I know"—she jumped up—"the telephone-operator will tell us."

She moved toward the door as the man she addressed rose from his chair with his heels close together. He took a step forward, then drew back his foot and stood rigidly erect. She disappeared through the door to the library, and a moment after the sound of her voice came back to the room.

"Central! Will you please tell me what time it is?" A pause. "Thank you."

She returned at once and sat down in the chair she had just left.

"Twenty minutes to five," Betty said, "and Captain Burnham is to be here at five. The recruiting-office where he is in charge is only a

few streets away, and I do not think that he will be late——"

"Yes, yes—probably." The response was given slowly while the speaker looked at her, cast his eyes about the room, and glanced toward the door. "He will be here in twenty minutes."

"Perhaps sooner," said Betty. "I should not be surprised if he were a little early."

"Ah—a little early——"

The words broke off and the man who had uttered them appeared to be plunged in thought. At length he aroused himself, as if suddenly becoming conscious that his silence might have become noticeable.

"Really—really," he said, briskly, "how regrettable! Nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to see at once the excellent Captain Burnham."

"But if you wait you will see him," she urged.

"Yes—yes," he said, rising quickly. "That is exactly the unfortunate part. I cannot wait. I have an engagement. I am really late now, but I wished to have a word with the Escotts."

"If you could only stay as long as this," laughed Betty, "it would have had to be a very short word indeed."

He gave no heed to the speech, but turned and, as he turned, said abruptly:—

"I cannot stay. I shall hope at another time, Miss Allison."

"Wait—wait just a minute," entreated Betty. "You mustn't go yet, I cannot let you."

He wheeled about quickly.

"And why not?"

A note of hardness which had not been there before rasped out suddenly in his voice.

"Oh!" Betty exclaimed, "when I have heard so much of you from the Escotts—when I am so glad to meet you—I really am——"

He scrutinized her face very closely indeed, and after a moment his countenance relaxed. His mouth stretched in a wide grin of gratified self-satisfaction.

"You have," he said, "a very pretty smile. We should be great friends. Yes." He kept staring at her, and the leering look which had lain in his eyes gave place to one of renewed and troubled uncertainty. "No. No"—he shook his head shortly—"I must go. I must fulfil my engagement."

"Oh, don't!" Betty protested, earnestly. "I have just had a great idea. I will tell you what we will do. Give up your engagement. I will telephone Dick to meet us there and that he must give us tea at the Ritz. It will be great fun. We can talk as well there as here, and there are always so many amusing people to see."

The man to whom she spoke came to a sudden standstill. His brows were wrinkled in thought, like one debating some important question for which an answer has to be found immediately. He drew a quick, deep breath and addressed her suavely:—

"Very well. Indeed, the prospect which you offer is too delightful! It cannot be resisted. I will let my engagement go."

"Then I will telephone at once," called Betty, as she ran again to the door leading to the library. She disappeared as she had before, and in an instant her voice was heard giving a telephone number. After the lapse of a few moments she went on, rapidly:—

"Oh, Dick, is that you? I am here at the Escotts' flat. I have a plan. I have found Mr. Lopez here, whom it seems you know. What do you say to going to the Ritz for tea? I think it would be great fun. You agree? Then I'll meet you there with Mr. Lopez at five instead of here. All right."

She came back into the room, walking slowly. The man whom she had left there had sunk into the chair which he had occupied. As she advanced he did not rise. She stood for a second irresolutely looking down at him. While she did so he threw himself back and, crossing one leg over the other, drew out a cigarette-case.

"I do not think that you have asked my permission to smoke," she said, sharply.

He laughed loudly and still with an air of bravado as he looked up at her and answered:—

"And why should I?"

He leaned over. Taking a match from a tray on the table he lit it.

"I can understand," she said, coldly, "that you should find no reason why you should."

"Then you know me—at length."

"I see that you recognize yourself in my description."

A hot flush of anger burned across his face and his teeth snapped viciously.

"I do not think I meant to let you know that I did, but you made me angry," she went on.

"I rather thought you knew me all the time," he answered, brusquely, lighting his cigarette and watching her. "That is why I was going. Now there is no such haste. Yes, I am Von Hippe. There is no reason, now that you have placed yourself in my power, to make a mystery of it any longer."

She clenched her hand as their eyes met.

"In fact," he went on, "with what I have to do that would be impossible."

"What is that?" she asked, shortly.

"Escott," he replied, calmly, "is in the Government employ, as you know. The relations which I established with the Escotts enabled me to learn certain facts. In that desk"—he pointed to a corner—"are certain papers which will be of great service to me—and others. This is the only occasion which I can hope to have of obtaining them. There are also certain people whom I have observed noticing me too closely of late. You have recognized me. The game is up. This evening I shall be far off with what I wish to have. To get that I came here this afternoon."

"Then I did not leave the door open," she said, dully.

"No; I opened it. One day Jack Escott lost his keys. He found them, as happened, again very quickly. Still, they were out of his possession for a time and——"

He paused significantly.

"I am not surprised," she said, disdainfully.

"To work!" he exclaimed, disregarding her speech and rising.

"And when you go, if I give an alarm——"

"I shall arrange so that you shall not do that."

He moved to the corner, and sank down on one knee. Drawing a small key from his pocket, he inserted it in the lock.

"Ah," he said, "you should have trusted to first impressions. The eyes of the sharp little girl who saw so clearly."

Betty had seated herself, and with her chin on her hand watched him as he worked at the desk.

"Do you know," she said, "as I was coming here I wished that I could do something in the war—something real and active."

"Well," he muttered, throwing open the desk-top, "you had your chance and lost it. I am a prize that they would be glad enough to capture."

"It doesn't seem to me now that this can be really happening, here."

"Much happens nowadays that no one could believe before."

"You are proud enough to think that you have outwitted me."

"*Ach!*" he exclaimed, contemptuously and indifferently, examining the handful of papers he had taken from a pigeon-hole. "A woman. What is that?"

"I will tell you, Baron von Hippe, what I think," she said, slowly. "I think that is where you and your nation have made a great mistake in this war. You have made it a man's war on your side. On our side, in France, in America, here, all the women are helping, and their help is sought and welcomed. In your country they would help too if they were allowed to do it, I have no doubt, but your man-rule there despises them. That is one of the reasons—the great reason why you are going to be beaten. Women

"INSTANTLY SEIZING HER WRIST, HE TWISTED HER ARM SO THAT HE ALMOST BROUGHT HER TO HER KNEES."

are to you as something to be pushed from the sidewalk on which you are walking. Really, you think of them as good for little more than to work in the fields like beasts."

"Women are fools!" he exclaimed, contemptuously, busy with the papers.

"The result is," she continued, steadily, "that you are not only fighting all the men of the Allies, but you have all the women against you."

"What adversaries!" he laughed, scornfully. "What have we to fear from them? What had I to fear from you? Why, you played into my hands like the pretty little simpleton you are. With big Captain Burnham coming here it was a different affair." He was glancing over the documents rapidly as he spoke. "You tell him not to come and—— This house is empty. At this hour no one will be about. With Captain Burnham arriving at any moment I could not do my work. Uncertain if you had not found me out, I had to get away, but in a moment all is changed with the danger of his presence removed. I need be on guard no longer. I have even time to find exactly what I want."

She watched him as he continued to run over the papers, which he had brought to a table before which he was standing.

"You must think me a fool."

"I think you foolish to believe that a woman can match herself against a man," he replied, in high good-humour.

"You are sure she cannot?" she asked, as she rose and drew near to him.

Placing herself on the other side of the table, with a quick movement of her hand she swept all the documents before him on to the floor.

"*Donnerwetter!*" he cried, furiously. "Why do you do that? It is child's play. You think to stop me so! Pick them up."

She stood motionless.

"Pick them up!" he roared.

"I told you all that you think women are good for."

"Will you pick them up?" he threatened.

She did not move or speak.

Instantly seizing her wrist, he twisted her arm so that he almost brought her to her knees. He held her bending thus until with her free hand she began to pick up the papers. Then he relaxed his hold. Puffing his cigarette he watched her, not deigning to help her and exulting in her subjugation. In his enjoyment of the situation he did not hurry her, but watched her as she slowly gathered the scattered documents. She seemed to suffer from the mortification of her employment, for her fingers worked awkwardly and often dropped what they held, which necessitated her picking the papers up again to place with the others on the table.

"So," he said, when at length they were again before him, "I think I will need all these, and I will take them with me." He placed the letters and documents in his pockets. "Now, really, I must go. You are a very charming miss, and at another time—but this is business and I cannot trust too much to chance. You were kind enough to remove the possibility of Captain Burnham's interruption; still, someone, after all, might appear. Ah, yes, I see what is in your mind! As soon as I have gone from the room you will follow, and you will denounce me to the first person met. That is what you think, but that shall not be." His glance travelled rapidly about. "There is nothing I see very practical with which to secure you."

"You wouldn't dare to tie me up?"

He lifted his eyebrows and blew out his breath.

"You think! Would I let a woman stand in my way when I am playing the game I am? That is a trifle."

He went to a door and threw it back. The opening revealed one of the cupboards so frequent in apartments where advantage is taken of all space.

"That is better!" he exclaimed. "There is a key. The door is strong enough for the purpose. You will not be heard beyond this room."

"You don't mean," she demanded, in evident amazement, "that you would shut me up there—that you would dare——"

"I would dare," he replied, grimly, "and a good deal more. Will you step in or——"

Her clear young voice interrupted him strongly and piercingly. The cry for help filled the place, and rose higher and higher in acute intensity, so that, as it seemed, doors and walls would hardly serve as barriers or distance check it, and it must be heard by the passers in the street below. He was manifestly startled and dismayed.

"Hush up that!" he called, savagely. "Will you keep quiet?"

He seized her arms and shook her, but she screamed the louder.

"Help! Help! Quick! Quick!"

He held her with one hand, and, putting an arm about her, dragged her toward the door. She was young and strong and hardy with the out-of-door life of a modern girl. She struggled desperately, and he had all he could do to hold her at first, much less force her to the prison he intended for her. She clung to him so that he could not move, and for some moments they remained in the same spot where she had sunk to her knees, while he bent over her. At length, reaching forward, he picked her up bodily and carried her to the cupboard. Stopping short at the threshold he tore her hands from him and threw her into it. Before she could rise he had half closed the door.

"Stay there!" he hissed. "I wish that I had more time!"

He banged the door shut and she heard the key turn in the lock. She did not stand up. She stayed on her knees and, instantly stretching her head forward, listened intently.

"Oh! Oh!" she moaned.

The panels were thin and she could hear his steps as he walked swiftly away. He went to the desk and the sounds indicated that he hastily gathered up some of the papers. Then he moved toward the entrance-door. He passed through it and had hardly taken a step beyond

"BEFORE SHE COULD RISE HE HAD HALF CLOSED THE DOOR.

when she caught clearly the tones of a man's voice. She cried out frenziedly :—

"I'm here ! I'm here ! "

A quick exclamation followed. At once came words which were audibly a question and a broken reply. Next the noise and crash of a contest as the stamp of men struggling was mingled with the smash and overturn of furniture. A moment of silence—and Betty heard the dull thump of a heavy body striking the floor. Then the key turned and the door was wrenched open.

Betty's glance about the place showed her that the man who had made her a prisoner was on the floor, raising himself slowly. Before her stood a tall young man in khaki.

"What's the matter ? " he cried. "What's he been doing ? "

"Oh ! " Betty gasped, and stammered : "He is Baron von Hippe."

"Von Hippe ? " frowned the young man. "Why, that's the chap all the Secret Service has been after for months. If it's really he it's a good capture."

"It is," Betty hurried on. "He crossed on the steamer when I was a little girl. I remember him perfectly, though. He came here after I did while I was waiting for you. He must have had another key that he had made, or something with which to let himself in. At first he denied who he was, but I knew all the time, and I was certain that there must be something wrong. I wanted to tell you and have you see him—but he insisted that he was going away. If he did I felt that he would escape altogether."

"So I should," sneered Von Hippe, who had risen and was standing up, "except for the unexpected arrival of Captain Burnham when he should have been somewhere else. It is always fortune which helps the stupid. If, as he was telephoned to do, he had gone to the Ritz——"

"Telephoned to go to the Ritz ? " repeated Burnham, turning to Betty in evident astonishment.

"Yes," Betty laughed, shortly and wildly; "you may not know that I telephoned you just now from here to go to the Ritz."

"Telephoned me from here ! " Burnham exclaimed. "Why, you couldn't ; the Escotts haven't any telephone. It has always been one of their pet economies."

"Yes," answered Betty, "that is just it. They haven't any telephone."

"There isn't any telephone ! " roared Von Hippe, taking a step forward as Burnham slightly raised the revolver which he had drawn out and held in his hand. "But," he stuttered, "you telephoned."

"You thought I did, Baron von Hippe," Betty trilled, merrily. "That amounted to just the same thing. I saw that if you believed that Captain Burnham was coming—I was so surprised I said that impulsively—you would not wait so that he could see you, and I was afraid that you might do with me just what you did, so that I couldn't follow you. The only way was to make you think I didn't know you and that he wasn't going to be here, and the only way to do that was to make you think there was a telephone."

Von Hippe stood staring.

"There was nothing ? " he spluttered.

"It was camouflage, Baron. When you thought I telephoned first and came back into the room and said, 'Twenty minutes to five,' you believed that it was earlier than it was. Then you made up your mind to stay, and that was just what I wanted. I pushed the papers off the table to gain time."

Von Hippe's face had turned from red to white.

"I remember that you said some very uncomplimentary things about women, and how little they were to be counted in war."

Burnham threw back his head and broke into hearty laughter as he watched Von Hippe's helpless fury.

"Stung, Baron," he chuckled. "I don't know what you call it in your language, but that's what we call it, and you and the rest of you had better not try to stand up against our women when they get into it as they have, you see. However, you'll have plenty of time to think over all this. What is it, Betty ? "

He sprang forward beside her and put his arm about her, swaying, with her hand resting on the table.

"I won't faint," she panted, "or anything of that silly sort. I just won't, but I am tired. The last fifteen minutes have not been easy. I was frightened—awfully frightened at the end, for I was afraid that you couldn't get here. Take him away "—she pointed to Von Hippe—"and really, we'll go to the Ritz for tea, or somewhere, and you shall hear all about it, and—Dick—perhaps—I've got something else to tell you."

LEST YOU FORGET !

DO not forget that THE STRAND MAGAZINE *may now be sent* POST FREE *to British soldiers and sailors at home and abroad. All you need do is to hand your copies, without wrapper or address, over the counter at any post-office in the United Kingdom, and they will be sent by the authorities wherever they will be most welcome.*

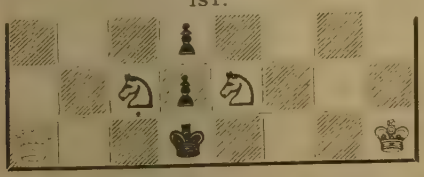
Cinema Chess.

By T. B. ROWLAND.

THIS is perhaps one of the most extraordinary positions that ever appeared on a chessboard, as, with the addition of White K and Q—each of which may be put on any unoccupied square—it will produce a problem that can be placed anywhere, be then moved in any direction, and on each be solved from any side.

As the White K and Q, each, can be placed on any one of fifty-seven squares, we get three thousand two hundred and forty-nine changes, and as the problem can be solved from any side after each, we get as many as twelve thousand nine hundred and ninety-six changes. Further, the theme can be altered by the addition of a White man, and so we get as many more changes, which again can be doubled by the addition of another man, and so on *ad infinitum*.

1ST.



Place the White K and Q as shown, then start them on a circuitous tour of the board, first upwards, then across the top, and down on the other side, moving them one square at a time, simultaneously. They will each thus traverse twenty-two squares, and, for the present, make one hundred and forty changes.

An interposing piece is necessary in the first position, so, for choice, place a Black B at its Q B 8. We then have an all-round three-move problem.

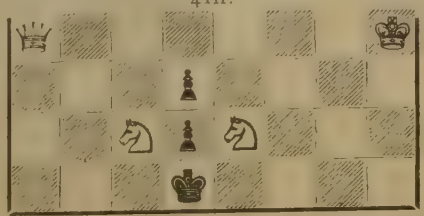
2ND.

This is an all-round two-mover. In solving, give the board a quarter, a half, and a three-quarter turn leftwards, bringing it completely round before the next change of K and Q. On each turn solve from the side facing you as you would from White's side. The addition of a Black pawn at its Q 5, in the second, converts it into a three-mover (*a*), which again becomes a two-mover on being turned.

3RD.

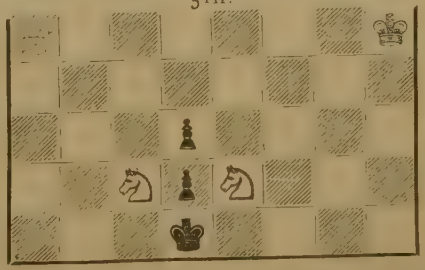
This, a three-mover, could be improved by placing an extra Black pawn at its Q R 5. On solving it remove the extra pawn to Q B 6 (*b*). Then it may be solved in three moves on the first and second turns, and in two on the third.

4TH.



Again, the extra pawn would be useful at Q R 4. The play can be varied by removing it to its Q 4 (*c*); or to Q R 7 (*d*); or, again, to K B 6, W K to K R 5, and a W B at Q R 7 (*e*), which produces a difficult, yet interesting, study of mate by discovery. On the first turn leftwards, only, place the extra Black pawn at its then Q Kt 6. This also applies to changes 6, 7, 8, and 9, all of which, from 4, can be solved in three moves after the change, and in two on turning, excepting the 6th, which is an all-round two-mover. The conditions of all those that follow are given at the end. No solution in this series exceeds three moves in length.

5TH.



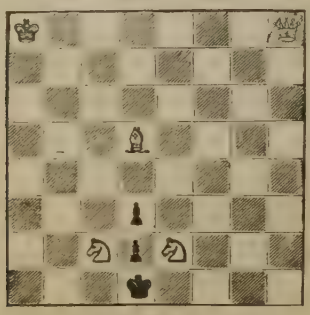
Changes 6, 7, and 8 bring the W K and Q to the top of the board; then, by placing the extra Black pawn at its Q 4, we have a problem similar to one composed by the only Irish lady problemist.

9th.—On the second turn remove the extra pawn to its then Q B 3, where it is to remain for the third turn. 10th.—Place a W B at Q R 8. Remove it before turning and place

a Black B at Q Kt 8 on the second turn. 11th.—The W K and Q, each, is now on its own 8th square. Place the W B at K B 8, and the Black B at Q Kt 8. 12th.—Place the W B at K R 8 and remove it before turning. The Black B to be at K R 8 on the second turn. 13th.—On the first turn place the extra pawn at Q B 2, where it is to remain for the second turn, and be at K Kt 7 for the third. 14th.—Place the extra pawn at its Q 4. Remove it to K Kt 7 on the third turn.

15TH.

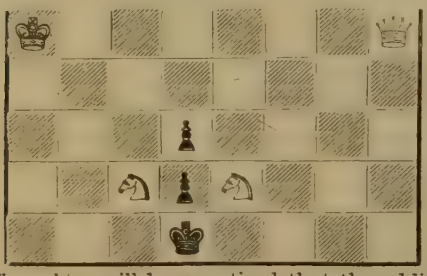
BLACK.



WHITE.

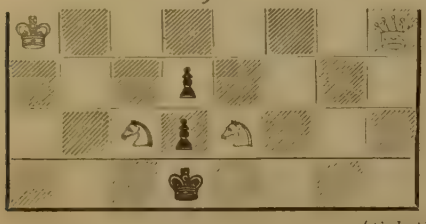
This three-mover is the same as one by the English composer, H. L. F. Meyer. A White pawn at K R 4 would improve it. The White pawn to occupy the same square on the second turn. Now, by taking off the B, and placing a W R at Q 8, and a Black pawn at its Q 4, we have another fine problem (*f*), which is not unlike one by the noted Scotch composer, Baxter, of Dundee. Before turning it place a Black B at Q Kt 8; this also applies to the 16th, 17th, and 18th.

18TH.



The solver will have noticed that the addition of the extra Black man is to prevent cooks in some cases, and dual continuations in others. On the second turn of the first position, for instance, there is a dual solution which could be prevented by such an addition.

19TH.



On the third turn of this place the W K at its then K B 1. Or, by keeping the W K at K 1, and placing a Black pawn at K R 3, a pretty three-move solution can be obtained (*g*).

20TH.

Here place a White pawn at Q 4 and we have an illustration of how the theme can be changed.

21ST.

This, a two-mover, can be turned into a three-mover by exchanging the P at Q 7 for a Black B (*h*); which, again, can be moved up one square (*i*). Or, again, place a White pawn at Q 4, Black Kt at K R 8, and a Black pawn at K B 6 (*j*). A symmetrical solution is obtained by removing W K to Q 5, and placing a W B at Q R 1 (*k*).

22ND.

This, with Black pawns at K R 7 and Q R 7, will be found to be difficult. A transformation in the solution takes place on removing the Q R P to its 5th square (*l*). Or, better still, take off the B and the R's Ps, remove Q to Q 5, and place a Black pawn at K B 7 (*m*). The last turn of this, the final one, shows:—

WHITE.—K at K R 1, Q at Q 4, Kts at K Kt 3 and K Kt 5.

BLACK.—K at K R 5, pawns at K B 5, K Kt 3, and K Kt 5.

Black to play, then White to mate in two moves.

In it we have economy of force, freedom, naturalness, strategy, and symmetry, all making a problem well worthy of ringing down the curtain on the present series.

CONDITIONS.

Changes 10, 11, 12, *f*, 16, 17, 18, *h*, *i*, and *m* are all-round three-movers; 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, and *j* are three-movers after change of K and Q, and two-movers on being turned; 21 and *k* are all-round two-movers; 22 and *l* are three-movers after change and on first turn, and two-movers on second and third turns.

(*Solutions next month.*)

The Hardest Bridge Problems

By R. F. FOSTER,

Author of "Advanced Auction Bridge," etc.

TEN years ago there were only half-a-dozen composers of card problems, three of whom were Americans. To-day there are at least fifty who have turned out creditable compositions, some of which are masterpieces of camouflage and cunning. For years it has been a struggle between the composer and the solver, and the composer has always won. Several newspapers have offered prizes for the greatest number of consecutive solutions, but no solver has survived beyond fifteen or twenty, although the lists have started with more than two hundred.

Composers have pitted their wits against the greatest card-players in the world—and won. It would probably take an expert four or five hours to solve the seven-carder printed in connection with this article, with odds of ten to one that he had not solved it after all.

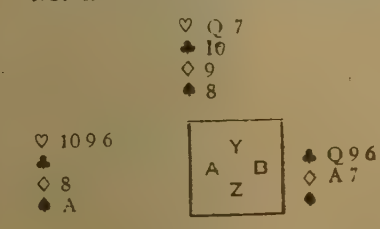
All problems are practically double-dummy. That is to say, each of the four players is supposed to know exactly what every other player holds, all the cards being placed on the table face up. Any problem that can be solved by more than one opening lead is unsound. There may be numerous variations in the continuation, owing to the different defensive plays open to the opponents, all of which must be met.

All bridge problems demand that a certain number of tricks shall be won against any defence. That means that every possible wriggle open to the opponents must be provided against in advance. If you lead an ace of trumps up to a guarded king, you must not take it for granted that the opponent will keep his king. He can play what he likes, and if he chooses to throw the king on the ace as the best chance to defeat your solution, he may.

The problems shown below have been selected as the best of their various classes. Half the number are trump declarations, and the other half are no-trumpers.

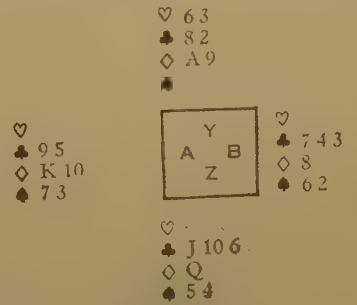
The best bridge problems are built up backwards, with the situation developed in the last two or three tricks as the foundation. The accompanying tricks are chiefly camouflage, designed to make it easy for the solver to take the wrong road. Bergholt insists that every bridge problem should represent a possible and natural position, which might have arisen in the course of play. Such a restriction would force the composer to provide for certain suits having been led a certain number of times, leaving the proper residue in each hand, or someone must have revoked. Well, here are six wonderful problems. Anyone who can solve them all in a week, or a month, may consider himself the champion solver of the world.

NO. 1. FIVE CARDS; NO TRUMPS



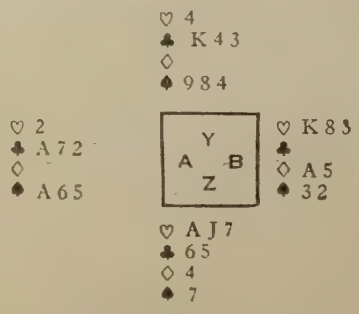
Z leads. Y and Z are to win four tricks.

NO. 2. SIX CARDS; HEARTS TRUMPS



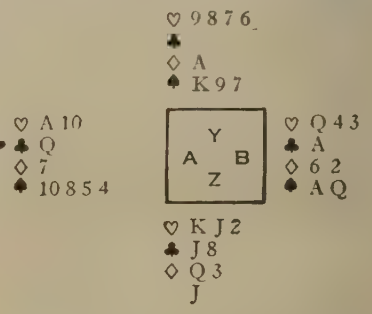
Z leads. Y and Z to win all six tricks.

NO. 3. SEVEN CARDS; NO TRUMPS



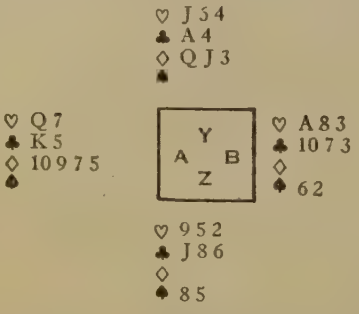
Z leads. Y and Z to win five tricks.

NO. 5. EIGHT CARDS; NO TRUMPS



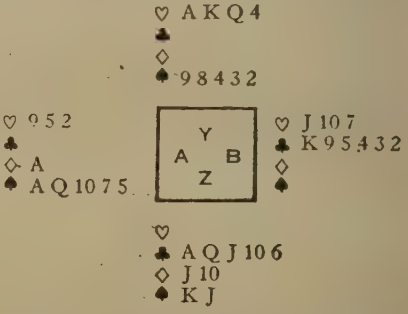
Z leads. Y and Z to win four tricks.

NO. 4. EIGHT CARDS HEARTS TRUMPS



Z leads. Y and Z to win six tricks.

NO. 6. NINE CARDS; HEARTS TRUMPS



Z leads. Y and Z to win six tricks.

(The Solutions will be given next month.)

THE CHESS CHARM.—Solutions and acknowledgments.

THE game is Stevens v. Frost, and is quoted from "The Chess Year Book."

DIAGRAM 1.—From "One Hundred Chess Problems," by Rev. A. C. Pearson.

1. Kt (R3) – Kt5 P x Kt If 1. . . . . P – QB4
2. B – B4 P x B 2. Kt – Q6 Q – Kt3
3. P – Q4ch P x P (e.p.) 3. R – B5ch Q x R
4. R – B5 mate 4. Kt – B7 mate

If 2. R x B
3. R – Kt5ch Any move
4. KR. QR. or P mates accordingly

DIAGRAM 2.—First Prize Winner *Western Daily Mercury*, quoted from "The Chess Year Book."

1. K – Q1

DIAGRAM 3.—From "The American Chess Bulletin."

1. B – Kt6

DIAGRAM 4.—From "The Chess Problem," Cassell and Co.

1. R – Kt8

DIAGRAM 5.—From "The Chess Amateur."

1. B from QKt4 took Q. Replace them.
2. Q from QB4 took Kt. Replace them.
3. B – Q6 dis. ch.
4. B – B3 mate

DIAGRAM 6.—From "Chess Fruits," by T. B. and F. F. Rowland.

1. K – K7 K – B4 3. K – Q5 K x R
2. K – K6 K x R 4. K x P K – R5
5. K x P K – R4 6. K – Kt3 mate

and variations which should be easily solved.

DIAGRAM 7.—From "Sam Loyd and His Problems," by A. C. White.

To prove the legality of this position it is necessary to go back more than one move. Place the White K on KB3, White P on KKt2, and Black P on his KB5, then play the following moves :—

1. P – Kt4 P x P (e.p.)
2. K x P dis. ch.

DIAGRAM 8.—Also from "Sam Loyd and His Problems."

Place White R on KB4, and on Q4 and White Kt on KKt4, or any other of three similar positions, which will be readily obvious.

DIAGRAM 9.—From "1,000 End Games," by C. E. C. Tattersall.

1. R – Kt7 . . . Q – Q5 3. R – Kt5 mate, etc.
2. R – Kt7ch K – B4

DIAGRAM 10.—Also from "1,000 End Games," by C. E. C. Tattersall.

1. Kt – Q5 P – B7 4. B – Q1ch Q x B
2. Kt – K3 P – B8 = Qch 5. Kt – Kt2ch, etc,
3. Kt – B4ch K – R5

DIAGRAM 11.—Source unknown.

1. K – Kt3 P – R4
2. P – K4 K – Kt8
3. P – K5 P x P stalemate.

The Four Wishes

by Charlotte Brontë

INTRODUCTION.

It was in 1895 that, having become possessed of a packet of letters by Charlotte Brontë, which I was not able to publish owing to the law which invested the copyright of letters in the executor of the writer, I bethought myself that I would seek an interview with this same executor. He was Arthur Bell Nicholls, a former curate of Haworth, Yorkshire, and the husband of Charlotte Brontë. A few years after the great novelist's death he had left Haworth and retired to Ireland. I ascertained that he was living at Banagher, in King's County.

More fortunate than many Brontë enthusiasts who had essayed to obtain the same privilege, I found myself a welcome guest. I had written to him at the precise psychological moment when he was anxious to talk about his famous wife.

When I alighted at Banagher I was welcomed by a genial little man who had discarded the profession of a cleric for that of a farmer, and who appeared more interested in his cattle and his farm than in the career which had brought him some reflected glory which he in no wise desired to emphasize. I discovered him in a happy home with his second wife, a cousin, who spoke to me very frankly and agreeably of her predecessor, the great Charlotte Brontë. She remembered Charlotte when she had visited Ireland on her honeymoon, and had liked her. But money was, I thought, not too plentiful in the Banagher household, and when I offered Mr. Nicholls some hundreds of pounds for certain little books of the Brontës, with the rights of publication, he not unnaturally accepted my suggestion. They had been tied up in a brown-paper parcel for forty years, and had I not gone to Banagher he assured me he intended to burn them all. These were the little books so graphically described by Mrs. Gaskell — stories and verses with which the Brontë children had worked through their apprenticeship to authorship. The friend with whom I acted became the possessor of these documents, I retaining only the copyright in them.

An examination revealed that they belonged to various years, some being written at the age of ten, and others when the sisters were twenty years old. Yet when they came to be copied it could not be said that many of them deserved publication; although I maintain that when an author has reached an established place in literature there is something very interesting in tracing the development of that author through various phases of literary effort. It has been commonly assumed that Charlotte Brontë suddenly attained to the faculty of good writing when "Jane Eyre" appeared. Some distinguished critics of a later period have found singular charm in the rejected novel, "The Professor." But what of the years before either book was written? And be it remembered that Miss Brontë was thirty years of age when her first novel was published. As a matter of fact, there are singular felicities of style to be found in these early manuscripts, even though not one of them would commend itself as a serious work of art. In any case, no apology need be made for the publication of this little fairy story, which is one of the manuscripts in question, written when the author was about twenty-two years of age. It is not a little interesting that a writer whose fame was made upon a novel in which she deliberately selected a heroine who was plain in feature should have made physical beauty the central idea of her fairy tale. This little story, in any case, has a very definite place in the history of the Brontës.

It is perhaps necessary that I should add that I had the fullest permission of Mr. Nicholls to publish any of his wife's manuscripts which he handed to me, and that throughout the remainder of his life and that of Mrs. Nicholls I remained on terms of cordial friendship with them—a friendship which included a genial appreciation of the various books which I came to write with the material which Mr. Nicholls placed at my disposal.

CLEMENT K. SHORTER.

ONE cold evening in December, 17—, while I was yet but a day labourer, though not even at that time wholly without some aspirations after fame and some intimations of future greatness, I was sitting alone by my cottage fire engaged in ambitious reveries of *l'avenir*, and amusing myself with wild and extravagant imaginations. A thousand evanescent wishes flitted through my mind, one of which was scarcely formed when another succeeded it; then a third, equally transitory, and so on.

While I was thus employed with building castles in the air my frail edifices were suddenly dissipated by an emphatic "Hem!" I started, and raised my head. Nothing was visible,

"'I AM A FAIRY,' HE REPLIED, IN A SHRILL VOICE; 'BUT FEAR NOTHING; MY INTENTIONS ARE NOT MISCHIEVOUS."

and, after a few minutes, supposing it to be only fancy, I resumed my occupation of weaving the web of waking visions. Again the "Hem!" was heard; again I looked up, when lo! sitting in the opposite chair I beheld the diminutive figure of a man dressed all in green. With a pretty considerable fluster I demanded his business, and how he had contrived to enter the house without my knowledge.

"I am a fairy," he replied, in a shrill voice; "but fear nothing; my intentions are not mischievous. On the contrary, I intend to gift you with the power of obtaining four wishes, provided you wish them at different times; and if you should happen to find the fruition of my theme not equal to your anticipations, still you are at liberty to cast it aside, which you must do before another wish is granted."

When he had concluded this information he gave me a ring, telling me that by the potency of the spell with which it was invested my desires would prove immediately successful.

I expressed my gratitude for this gift in the warmest terms, and then inquired how I should dispose of the ring when I had four times arrived at the possession of that which I might wish.

"Come with it at midnight to the little valley in the uplands, a mile hence," said he, "and there you will be rid of it when it becomes useless."

With these words he vanished from my sight. I stood for some minutes incredulous of the reality of that which I had witnessed, until at last I was convinced by the green-coloured ring set in gold that sparkled in my hand.

By some strange influence I had been preserved from any feeling of fear during my conversation with the fairy, but now I began to feel certain doubts and misgivings as to the propriety of having any dealings with supernatural beings. These, however, I soon quelled, and began forthwith to consider what should be the nature of my first wish. After some deliberation I found the desire for beauty was uppermost in my mind, and therefore formed a wish that next morning when I arose I should find myself possessed of surpassing loveliness.

That night my dreams were filled with anticipations of future grandeur, but the gay visions which my sleeping fancy called into being were dispelled by the first sounds of morning.

I awoke lightsome and refreshed, and springing out of bed glanced half doubtingly into the small looking-glass, which decorated the wall of my apartment, to ascertain if any change for the better had been wrought in me since the preceding night.

Never shall I forget the thrill of delighted surprise which passed through me when I beheld my altered appearance. There I stood, tall, slender, and graceful as a young poplar tree, all my limbs moulded in the most perfect and elegant symmetry, my complexion of the purest red and white, my eyes blue and brilliant, swimming in liquid radiance under the narrow, dark arches of two exquisitely-formed eyebrows, my mouth of winning sweetness, and lastly my hair clustering in rich black curls over a forehead smooth as ivory.

In short, I have never yet heard or read of any beauty that could at all equal the splendour of comeliness with which I was at that moment invested.

I stood for a long time gazing at myself in a trance of admiration while happiness such as I had never known before overflowed my heart. That day happened to be Sunday, and accordingly I put on my best clothes and proceeded forthwith towards the church. The service had just commenced when I arrived, and as I walked up the aisle to my pew I felt that the eyes of the whole assembly were upon me, and that proud consciousness gave an elasticity to my gait which added stateliness and majesty to my other innumerable graces. Among those who viewed me most attentively was Lady Beatrice Ducie. This personage was the widow of Lord Ducie, owner of the chief part of the village where I resided and nearly all the surrounding land for many miles, who, when he died, left her the whole of his immense estates. She was without children and perfectly at liberty to marry whomsoever she might chance to fix her heart on, and therefore, though her ladyship had passed the meridian of life, was besides fat and ugly, and into the bargain had the reputation of being a witch, I cherished hopes that she might take a liking for me, seeing I was so very handsome; and by making me her spouse raise me at once from indigence to the highest pitch of luxury and affluence.

These were my ambitious meditations as I slowly retraced my steps homeward.

In the afternoon I again attended church, and again Lady Ducie favoured me with many smiles and glances expressive of her admiration. At length my approaching good fortune was placed beyond a doubt, for while I was standing in the porch after service was over she happened to pass, and inclining her head towards me said: "Come to my house to-morrow at four o'clock." I only answered by a low bow and then hastened back to my cottage.

On Monday afternoon I dressed myself in my best and, putting a Christmas rose in the buttonhole of my coat, hastened to the appointed rendezvous.

When I entered the avenue of Ducie Castle a footman in rich livery stopped and requested me to follow him. I complied and we proceeded down a long walk to a bower of evergreens, where sat her ladyship in a pensive posture. Her stout, lusty figure was arrayed in a robe of purest white muslin, elegantly embroidered. On her head she wore an elaborately curled wig, among which borrowed tresses was twined a wreath of artificial flowers, and her brawny shoulders were enveloped in a costly Indian shawl. At my approach she arose and saluted me. I returned the compliment, and when we were seated, and the footman had withdrawn, business summarily commenced by her rendering me the possession of her hand and heart, both which offers, of course, I willingly accepted.

Three weeks after we were married in the parish church by special licence, amidst the rejoicings of her numerous tenantry, to whom a sumptuous entertainment was that day given.

I now entered upon a new scene of life. Every object which met my eyes spoke of opulence and grandeur. Every meal of which I partook seemed to me a luxurious feast. As I wandered through the vast halls and magnificent apartments of my new residence I felt my heart dilating with gratified pride at the thought that they were my own.

Towards the obsequious domestics that thronged around me I behaved with the utmost respect and deference, being impelled thereto by a feeling of awe inspired by their superior breeding and splendid appearance.

I was now constantly encompassed by visitors from among those who moved in the highest circles of society. My time was passed in the enjoyment of all sorts of pleasures; balls, concerts, and dinners were given almost every day at the castle in honour of our wedding. My evenings were spent in hearing music, or seeing dancing and gormandizing; my days in excursions over the country, either on horseback or in a carriage.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, I was not happy. The rooms were so numerous that I was often lost in my own house, and sometimes got into awkward predicaments in attempting to find some particular apartment. Our high-bred guests despised me for my clownish manners and deportment. I was forced to bear patiently the most humiliating jokes and sneers from noble lips. My own servants insulted me with impunity; and, finally, my wife's temper showed itself every day more and more in the most hideous light. She became terribly jealous, and would hardly suffer me to go out of her sight a moment. In short, before the end of three months I sincerely wished myself separated from her and reduced again to the situation of a plain and coarse but honest and contented plough-boy.

This separation was occasioned by the following incident sooner than I expected. At a party which we gave one evening there chanced to be present a young lady named Cecilia Standon. She possessed no mean share of beauty, and had besides the most graceful demeanour I ever saw. Her manner was kind, gentle, and obliging, without any of that haughty superciliousness which so annoyed me in others of my fashionable acquaintances. If I made a foolish observation or transgressed against the rules of politeness she did not give vent

to her contempt in a laugh or suppressed titter, but informed me in a whisper what I ought to have done, and instructed me how to do it.

When she was gone I remarked to my wife what a kind and excellent lady Miss Cecilia Standon was. "Yes," exclaimed she, reddening, "everyone can please you but me. Don't think to elude my vigilance. I saw you talking and laughing with her all the time she was here, you low-born creature whom I raised from obscurity to splendour. And yet not one spark of gratitude do you feel towards me. But I will have my revenge." So saying, she left me to meditate alone on what that revenge might be.

"HER DARK EYES WERE CLOSED AND THEIR LONG LASHES LAY MOTIONLESS ON A CHEEK PALE AS MARBLE. SHE WAS QUITE STIFF AND DEAD."

The same night, as I lay in bed restless, I heard suddenly a noise of footsteps outside the chamber door. Compelled by irresistible curiosity, I rose and opened it without making any sound. My surprise was great on beholding the figure of my wife, stealing along on tiptoe with her back towards me, and a lighted candle in her hand. Anxious to know what could be her motive for walking about the house at this time of night I followed softly, taking care to time my steps so as to coincide with hers.

After proceeding along many passages and galleries which I had never before seen, we descended a very long staircase that led us underneath the coal and wine cellars to a damp, subterraneous vault. Here she stopped and deposited the candle on the ground. I shrank instinctively, for the purpose of concealment, behind a massive stone pillar which upheld the arched roof on one side.

The rumours which I had often heard of her being a witch passed with painful distinctness across my mind, and I trembled violently. Presently she knelt with folded hands and began to mutter some indistinguishable words in a strange tone. Flames now darted out of the earth, and huge smouldering clouds of smoke rolled over the

slimy walls, concealing their hideousness from the eye.

At length the dead silence that had hitherto reigned unbroken was dissipated by a tremendous cry which shook the house to its centre, and I saw six black, indefinable figures gliding through the darkness bearing a funeral bier on which lay arranged, as I had seen her the previous evening, in robes of satin and tall snowy ostrich plumes, the form of Cecilia Standon. Her dark eyes were closed and their long lashes lay motionless on a cheek pale as marble. She was quite stiff and dead.

At this appalling sight I could restrain myself no longer, and uttering a loud shriek I sprang from behind the pillar. My wife saw me. She started from her kneeling position, and rushed furiously towards where I stood, exclaiming in tones rendered tremulous by excessive fury: "Wretch, wretch, what demon has lured thee hither to thy fate?" With these words she seized me by the throat and attempted to strangle me.

I screamed and struggled in vain. Life was ebbing apace when suddenly she loosened her grasp, tottered, and fell dead.

When I was sufficiently recovered from the effects of her infernal grip to look around I saw by the light of the candle a little man in a green coat striding over her and flourishing a bloody dagger in the air. In his sharp, wild physiognomy I immediately recognized the fairy who six months ago had given me the ring.

That was the occasion of my present situation. He had stabbed my wife through the heart, and thus afforded me opportune relief at the moment when I so much needed it.

After tendering him my most ardent thanks for his kindness I ventured to ask what we should do with the dead body.

"Leave that to me," he replied. "But now as the day is dawning, and I must soon be gone, do you wish to return to your former rank of a happy, honest labourer, being deprived of the beauty which has been the source of so much trouble to you, or will you remain as you are? Decide quickly, for my time is limited."

I replied unhesitatingly, "Let me return to my former rank," and no sooner were the words out of my mouth than I found myself standing alone at the porch of my humble cottage, plain and coarse as ever, without any remains of the extreme comeliness with which I had been so lately invested.

I cast a glance at the tall towers of Ducie Castle which appeared in the distance faintly

"I STAGGERED, REELED, AND FELL INSENSIBLE."

illuminated by the light reflected from rosy clouds hovering over the eastern horizon, and then, stooping as I passed beneath the lowly lintel, once more crossed the threshold of my parental hut.

A day or two after, while I was sitting at breakfast, a neighbour entered and, after inquiring how I did, etc., asked me where I had been for the last half year. Seeing it necessary to dissemble, I answered that I had been on a visit to a relation who lived at a great distance. This satisfied him, and I then inquired if anything had happened in the village lately.

"Yes," said he; "a little while after you were gone Lady Ducie married the handsomest young man that was ever seen, but nobody knew where he came from and most people thought that he was a fairy; and now about four days ago Lady Ducie, her husband, and Lord Standon's eldest daughter all vanished on the same night and have never been heard of since, though the strictest search has been made. Yesterday her ladyship's brother came and took possession of the estate, and he is trying to hush up the matter as much as he can."

This intelligence gave me no small degree of satisfaction, as I was now certain that none of the villagers had any suspicion of my dealings with the fairy.

But to proceed. I had yet liberty to make three more wishes; and, after much consideration, being convinced of the vanity of desiring such a transitory thing as my first, I fixed upon "superior talent" as the aim of my second wish; and no sooner had I done so than I felt an expansion, as it were, of soul within me.

Everything appeared to my mental vision in a new light. High thoughts elevated my mind, and abstruse meditations racked my brain continually. But you shall presently hear the upshot of this sudden *éclaircissement*.

One day I was sent to a neighbouring market town, by one Mr. Tenderden, a gentleman of some consequence in our village, for the purpose of buying several articles in glass and china.

When I had made my purchases I directed them to be packed up in straw, and then with the basket on my back trudged off homeward. But ere I was half-way night overtook me. There was no moon and the darkness was also much increased by a small mizzling rain. Cold and drenched to the skin, I arrived at the Rising Sun, a little wayside inn, which lay in my route.

On opening the door my eyes were saluted by the light of a bright fire, round which sat about half-a-dozen of my acquaintance.

After calling for a drop of something to warm me, and carefully depositing the basket of glass on the ground, I seated myself amongst them. They were engaged in a discussion as to whether a monarchical or republican form of government was the best. The chief champion of the republican side was Bob Sylvester, a blacksmith by trade, and of the largest loquacity of any man I ever saw. He was proud of his argumentative talents, but by dint of my fairy gift I soon silenced him, amid cheers from both sides of the house.

Bob was a man of hot temper, and not calculated for lying down quietly under a defeat. He therefore rose and challenged me to single combat. I accepted, and a regular battle ensued. After some hard hits he closed in furiously, and dealt me a tremendous left-handed blow. I staggered, reeled, and fell insensible. The last thing I remember was a horrible crash as if the house was tumbling in about my ears.

When I recovered my senses I was laid in bed in my own house, all cut, bruised, and bloody. I was soon given to understand that the basket of glass was broken, and Mr. Tenderden, being a miserly, hard-hearted man, made me stand to the loss, which was upwards of five pounds.

When I was able to walk about again I determined to get rid of my ring forthwith in the manner the fairy had pointed out, seeing that it brought me nothing but ill-luck.

It was a fine clear night in October when I reached the little valley in the uplands before mentioned. There was a gentle frost, and the stars were twinkling with the lustre of diamonds. A chill breeze whistled in the gusty passes of the hills that surrounded the vale, but I wrapped my cloak around me and standing in a sheltered nook boldly awaited the event.

After about half an hour of dead silence I heard a sound as of many voices weeping and lamenting at a distance. This continued for some time until it was interrupted by another voice, seemingly close at hand. I started at the contiguity of the sound, and looked on every side, but nothing was visible. Still the strain kept rising and drawing nearer. At length the following words, sung in a melancholy though harmonious tone, became distinctly audible:—

Hearken, O mortal! to the wail
Which round the wandering night-winds flies,
Soft-sighing 'neath the moonbeams pale,
How low! How old! its murmuring!

No other voice, no other tone,
Disturbs the silence deep;
All, saving that prophetic moan,
Are hushed in quiet sleep.

But, hark! again the sighing wail
Upon the rising breeze doth swell.
Oh! hasten from this haunted vale,
Mournful as a funeral knell!

For here when gloomy midnight reigns,
The fairies form their ring,
And, unto wild unearthly strains,
In measured cadence sing.

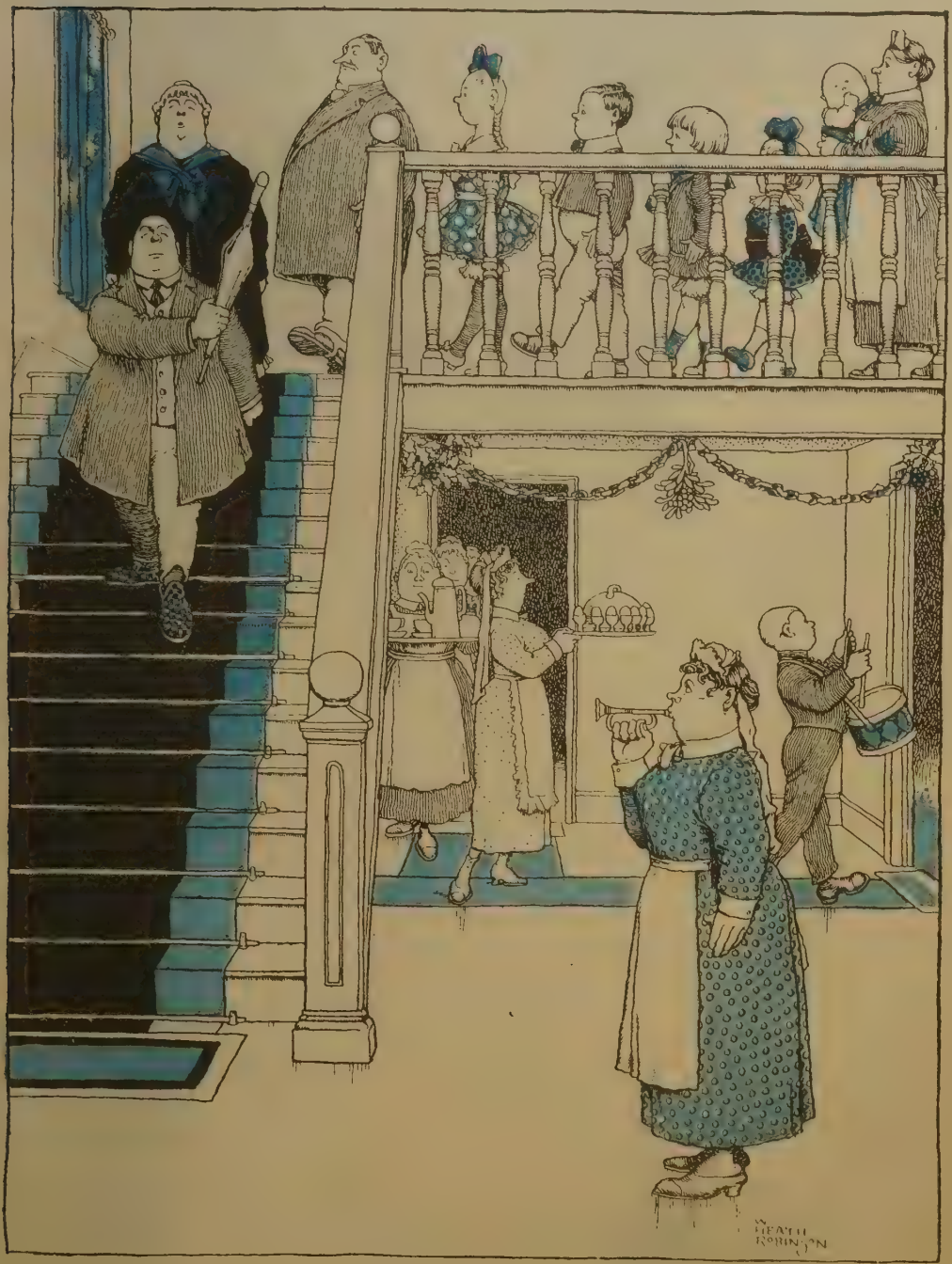
But now the elfin horn resounds,
No longer mayst thou stay;
Near and more near the music sounds,
Then, Mortal! haste away.

Here I certainly heard the music of a very sweet and mellow horn. At that instant the ring which I held in my hand melted and became like a drop of dew, which trickled down my fingers and, falling on the dead leaves spread around, vanished.

The Militarization of Christmas

(IF AND WHEN WE BECOME A MILITARY NATION).

By W. HEATH ROBINSON.



REVELLY.

(Breakfast's Ready.)

THE MILITARIZING OF AN OLD CHRISTMAS CUSTOM.

THE MILITARIZATION OF CHRISTMAS EVE.
(General Santa Claus.)

THE SURRENDER OF A DETACHMENT OF WAITS AFTER A SEVERE BEDROOM WINDOW BARRAGE.

Eileen

by

E. Bland

Illustrated by Helen McKie

"OH, miss," said Eileen, brightly, "why ever don't you write to a lonely soldier?"

"A lonely soldier?" the other girl echoed, the girl who was a young lady and Eileen's mistress. Eileen, of course, was only a young girl: if she had not gone into service she might have been called a young lady herself, or at any rate a young person. Eileen often thought of this.

"It's a burning shame master keeping you mewed up the way he does, Miss Jane. I always have said and I always shall say," Eileen asserted, with enthusiastic inaccuracy, "that it's a downright shame."

"I can't allow you to talk like that," said Jane, with equal inaccuracy and considerably less enthusiasm.

"Well, I won't, then," Eileen conceded; "but is it right, I ask you—when the country's at war like this and everyone's doing their bit, even the vicar's daughters washing up at the canteen, and every other young lady in the road having her bit of fun—I mean helping to run the war, with nursing or munitions or flag days or handing round buns or cups of tea at soldiers' socials? And you formed to shine, too! Why, it ain't giving you a chance."

"Hadn't you better get on with your dusting?" Jane asked.

"Why, so I am, miss"—Eileen shook a filthy duster very near Jane's face, and clouds of dust from it twinkled in the cube of sunshine above the Brussels carpet—"but I can talk and work, and always could from a child," she added, knocking down the music-stool, "and what I say is, if kept so close why not write to a lonely soldier? You won't feel quite so lonely. I mean you'll feel you're helping on the war—doing your bit, as the saying is."

"But what soldier?" Jane, fresh from school and jealously guarded by an elderly aunt and a father whose life was spent entirely in the City, in feeding, and in sleep, was ready to be lured by any hope of something new, something more interesting than arranging the flowers, shopping with Aunt Alma, and having other aunts to tea.

"What sort of soldier?" Eileen repeated. "I'll soon show you what sort of soldier. I've got one in me pocket."

What she dragged thence was, however, only a copy of the day-before-yesterday's paper.

"I kep' it on purpose to show you, miss," she said, proudly, "knowing you never have so much as an evening out, nor a thought you can call your own. Look, miss, here it is. 'Lonely soldier will be grateful for letters. Box B 237.' Think how pleased B 237 will be to get a letter directed in your writing. I always say you do write a nice hand, anyhow."

"But I shouldn't know what to say to a stranger."

"I shouldn't make a stranger of him," Eileen advised. "Write as if you was old friends; tell him all about the way the roses is coming out in the garden, and about the canaries and the dogs. That's what I always do."

"You always do *what?*"

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"AND WHAT I SAY IS, WHY NOT WRITE TO A LONELY SOLDIER?"

"Write to lonely soldiers about things like that. I wrote to three last week."

"But we haven't any canaries or dogs, and the roses——"

"Oh, well, what I say is, if you can't make up a few corkers to cheer them poor boys in the trenches, what *can* you make 'em up for? The last one I wrote to I said I lived in a lonely farm within sound of the sad sea waves, and the honeysuckle peeping in at the window while I was writing. I sent him a bit."

"But there isn't any honeysuckle," Jane insisted; "you know there isn't."

"Lord!" said Eileen, "I bought it off of a boy at the door; two bunches a penny."

"And suppose he got leave, and came to see you, he'd find out you'd been deceiving him and that there weren't any canaries or honeysuckle or——"

"Not him," Eileen assured her. "I never gives them no address. I like to write to different ones every time. I did mean to write to this one, but I've got so behind with the dusting, you hindering me so with your talk, miss, I sha'n't have time for more than a postcard to-day. I've got a lonely sergeant to send that to. I sha'n't have time for that one you've got in your hand, so you may have him if you like, miss, and welcome."

"If I did write," said Jane, "I should want to get an answer. Don't you want to get answers?"

"Oh, no, miss," said Eileen, virtuously, "I couldn't do a thing like that. Mother says a young girl can't be too careful. Besides, I'm walking out with two as it is, till I see which I like best. Alf on Sundays, and Erb on my evening."

"I should want an answer," Jane persisted, "and when it came father would open it as likely as not."

"Oh, if that's all," said Eileen, kindly, "you could have it addressed to my aunt — care of — and I could call for it for you. *That's* easy. You do it, miss. Why, you might pick up a young man that way. More unlikely things happen every day in the papers. I always say you aren't so bad-looking if you'd do your hair more stylish — more the way of mine and——"

"If I did write it wouldn't be with any idea of that sort, but just because the man's lonely."

"Of course, miss," said Eileen, unconcerned. "Well—you do it and see what comes of it."

Jane Biglow lived in a dull house in a street of dull houses; she had no one to talk to but the aunt and Eileen. Let those who find it incredible that a young lady should allow an Eileen to speak to her thus try the experiment of such a life, especially after a happy girlhood at a boarding-school. They will be surprised at the result. And if any think that no aunt would employ an Eileen capable of such cheery badinage, I can only point out that they do not know Eileen, nor the critical state of the servant question in this fifth year of our war.

Jane kept the paper, and again and again that afternoon she looked at it. And every time she looked at it the idea of writing to B 237 appealed to her more and more. Taken merely as a theme for meditation the subject was full of interest. All sorts of questions suggested themselves. What sort of man was B 237—young or old? Dark or fair? Stupid or clever? A gentleman or a working man? His first letter—if she ever let it come—would answer some of the questions. He might be a most interesting person—a pale student, perhaps, who had deserted the book for the bayonet. He might, of course, be dullness' very self, and a vegetarian and all-woollen in private life. Alternatively, he might be raffish, and a bounder wholly beyond the pale. He might be very nice. He might be very horrid.

"But if he is horrid I needn't write again," she told herself.

In these reflections the afternoon passed so quickly that the return of her aunt, who had been to a tea where there was a missionary and an address, came quite as a surprise. Jane's thoughts were by this time so inclined to wander and so charmed with the new field of their wanderings that she had to be asked three times to pass the bread and butter.

"I hope you're not sickening for something, my dear," said the aunt. "Your eyes are very bright, and you've got a most unbecomingly high colour—and you don't seem to know what you're doing with the milk—there—you've done it!"

Embarrassed by the aunt's scrutiny, Jane had indeed poured the milk into the teapot. Fresh tea had to be made, and in the consequent fuss Jane's looks escaped further comment. But the little passage had excited her. So dull was her life that even the possession of such a secret as this thrilled her deliciously. She experienced all the charming consciousness of a heroine of romance. She had a secret from her aunt.

Next day the letter was written. That was easy. It was much more difficult to give the letter to Eileen to post. So difficult, indeed, that she could not do it. She posted the letter herself between two letters of her aunt's, a cheque to the Stores, and a subscription to the Aborigines Investigation Society.

"So you did write, miss?" said Eileen, next day, pausing in her dusting.

"How did you know?"

"Your blotter," said Eileen, innocently. "'B 237' as plain as the nose on your face, and 'to relieve your loneliness'—there wasn't any more showing."

Jane, realizing the hopelessness of explaining the delicacies which some people feel about other people's blotting-paper, could only be glad that it was Eileen and not the aunt who had been interested in the blotter.

"I'd have liked to see what you said, miss," said Eileen; "you haven't sent it off, have you?"

"Yes, I have," said Jane, "and that'll do, Eileen. Get on with your work."

"I am," Eileen retorted, quite amiably. "Where'd you tell him to direct to?"

"The address you gave me. The Thatched House, Hendon. That's right, isn't it?" You cannot, after all, continue to snub the confidante who is going to fetch the answer to the first letter you have ever in your life written to any man but an uncle or a father.

"Quite correct," Eileen gave a little giggle, "and I'll fetch them for you, like I said. It's me aunt's house—more like a sister to me, she being young and my uncle's third. She'll enter into it. But I do wish I'd seen the letter you wrote."

The letter had not been long, and it had not proved easy to begin it. Once started, it wrote itself—but it was not started without much thought and a perfect snowstorm of torn-up false beginnings. It did not, in fact, get itself started till the look of the words "The Thatched House" written at the top of the page recalled to her Eileen's method of arranging romantic backgrounds for herself in the letters she wrote, and did not wish to have answered. Then all was plain sailing. She wrote:—

"You will see that I live in the country. I only see my father and my aunt, and I have no friends near here, and my father will not allow me to be

"EMBARRASSED BY THE AUNT'S SCRUTINY, JANE HAD POURED THE MILK INTO THE TEAPOT."

a nurse, or to make munitions, or work in a canteen, or be a motor driver, or even sell flags on the days that keep happening for that purpose. So, you see, I am perhaps almost as lonely as you are. And that makes me very sorry for you, and I am writing this in the hope that it may help a little to relieve your loneliness. I am very fond of reading, but you cannot read all day. This is a beautiful old thatched house, covered with roses and jasmine, and the garden has a yew walk and a sundial, with 'Tempus fugit manet amicitia' on it. I often look at it and think that Time does not really fly at all, but just creeps. I expect it is the same with you. If you like to write to me I will write again. I have two cats, a black and a white one, and a dog called Pincher. Since you are so lonely, please think of me as a friend, and I will think of you, and wish you safe and happy, and you will know that you are not alone because someone will think of you every day. I know this is a very stupid letter, but perhaps the rest will be better. I am not used to writing to people I do not know. Good-bye. I send you a piece of jasmine out of the garden. Do not feel lonely any more, will you?

"Your friend who will not forget to think of you,

"JANE SURTEES."

She had not been able to bring herself to write her full names, Jane Surtees Biglow. Biglow was so hideous. When she had read the letter through she drew up an amendment, in a timid, defensive postscript.

"P.S.—I am quite old and very plain. But friendship is just as valuable however old a person is, and sometimes I think plain people make better friends than those who are considered pretty."

With this ostrich-like performance the letter had ended.

It would be days before there could be an answer; but they would be days holding a new interest. They did, in fact, prove to be days of quite unexpected charm—the dullest details of the routine of life acquired a new value under the double magic of secrecy and anticipation. But day followed day in a longer procession than either Jane or Eileen had calculated on, and doubts and distresses presently crept in. Why did not the lonely soldier answer the letter? Perhaps he was not lonely any longer.

"You little fool," said Jane to herself, "do you really suppose your rotten letter could make the least difference to anyone? I oughtn't to have written, and I wish I hadn't written. But I did write. And now I'll forget the whole thing and learn another Beethoven Sonata."

It was while she was practising that difficult second movement—the Presto one—that Eileen brought her the letter from B 237.

"There!" she said. "My aunt sent it on in an envelope directed to me, so as you shouldn't have to wait till Sunday for me to fetch it. She knew how you'd be feeling. I say, the funny thing is it's got a common penny stamp. I expect he's got leave. He'll be calling at the Thatched House to see you," Eileen giggled, joyously.

"Oh, *no*," said Jane. "Give me the letter."

"It feels thick and stiff," Eileen remarked. "Has he sent you his photo?"

It was just what he had done, and Eileen gloated over the handsome, clear-cut face, while Jane read the letter:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—How can I thank you for your letter? It came to me like a breath of the country lanes and fields that lie round your beautiful thatched house. I can smell the hay and the jasmine, which must be very early with you. Ours at home does not come out till July. Now I must tell you that I am not in France; I am hurt, and I am in London. Write to me again, won't you? because, though I am not in the trenches, I am very lonely here, and your letters will make a difference in my life that you can hardly imagine. I am sending you my photograph, so that you may know what the man looks like whom you are writing to. And I am going to dare to ask, very humbly, if you will send me yours. I want to see the face of my friend. I quite agree with what you say about old and plain friends, but there is something about your letter, I can't think what it is, which makes me somehow unable to believe that you are plain or old."

"SHE DREW UP AN AMENDMENT, IN A TIMID, DEFENSIVE POSTSCRIPT. 'P.S.—I AM QUITE OLD AND VERY PLAIN.'"

Jane hoped that the something was not her unformed girlish writing.

"I want to know everything about you," the letter went on, "whether you care for music, and, if so, what sort of music. What sort of books you like, your favourite author, your favourite composer, your favourite pudding. Tell me everything you care to tell. And believe that your letters will be more to me than I can express. And if you would care to know more about me—ask me questions, let me answer them.—I am, your humble and grateful servant,

"B 237."

The address at the top of the letter was 'The Beeches, West Wimbledon,' where, of course there are no beeches.

"IF YOU DON'T GO, I SHALL,' SAID EILEEN, 'ON ME EVENING OUT. AND SAY I'M YOU.'"

She did ask questions. He answered them. And Eileen was only able to share in the thrilling excitement of the correspondence by opening Jane's corner drawer with a pen-knife—quite an easy feat if you have the practised hand of an Eileen.

Jane's days went by in a dream. She was startled, after a few weeks of letters sent and received, to find herself living almost solely for the postwoman's arrival. He liked the books that she liked—only he liked others, which she hadn't read. He agreed with her view that Op. 700,000 was Beethoven's finest composition. He liked Browning. He liked Mozart. He liked meringues. All his letters pleaded for her photograph. She ignored the pleading—substituting for the desired picture elaborate pictures of her life at the Thatched House. Her imagination played untrammelled with the old house and garden of her fancy till his seventeenth letter said:—

"I must have misunderstood. I thought it was in the honeysuckle arbour that you read 'Pippa Passes.' And now you say it was the jasmine arbour. And have you three cows at the Thatched House, or seven?"

Jane bit the penholder and wrote: "Three cows then, seven now. And I read 'Pippa Passes' simply everywhere."

The jasmine really was out—the month being July—when the letter came from him which Eileen was privileged to see honestly and openly, without recourse to duplicities and knife-blades. The letter was short.

"My Dear Friend,—I want to see you. More than I can say I want to see you. And you must know that. What I mean is that there are things I must say to you which can't be said by ink or paper. I want all to be clear and plain and straightforward between us."

"Straightforward," said Eileen. "He's spotted the jasmine and things not being the right time of year. You ought to have read the Language of Flowers same as what I told you to."

"Yes, but go on," said Jane, anxiously.

"Will you come and see me?" said the letter.

"Lor!" said Eileen.

"Go on," said Jane.

"Come and see me," said the letter. "If I could only see you face to face I think everything would smooth itself out. I cannot come to you."

"No—that he couldn't," said Eileen. "Master being what he is."

"He's wounded, too," said Jane; "go on."

"But if you will come to see me," the letter continued, "I think I can make you understand. You will come? You will?" the letter urged, adding prosaic details about trains and trams.

"You might as well," said Eileen.

"Oh, I *couldn't!*" said Jane.

"The dear, kind heart," the letter insisted, "which taught you how to write to a lonely soldier, will bring you to me now. I know it. No—I don't know it. I only implore it.

"Your lonely friend,
"B 237."

"If you don't go, I shall," said Eileen, "on me evening out. And say I'm you."

"My name is Charles Denver," the letter ended.

"SHE CROSSED LONDON IN A MAZE OF UNCERTAINTY."

"I thought it would be Willibald or Montmorency, at least," said Eileen.

"Oh—do you think I *could* go?" Jane asked.

She went.

Leaving no message, assigning no appointment at the sewing club or ambulance class, she went. She crossed London in a maze of uncertainty, and reached Wimbledon by a miracle.

The Beeches was a large, ugly house of the type which house agents term handsome.

She had put on her prettiest muslin dress, and the big hat that suited her. When a very white-frilled maid opened the door she asked in a high, unnatural voice for Mr. Denver.

"He's in the garden, ma'am," said the maid; "will you please come straight through?"

Jane, her face scarlet, her hands and feet cold as ice, followed through the hall.

"I suppose he's very badly wounded, or he would have suggested coming to see me instead of asking me to come here," she thought. "Oh, I wish I hadn't. I wish I'd made a mistake and come on the wrong day, so that he wouldn't be here. But if he's wounded I suppose he's always here. But who looks after him? Where are his mother and his aunts and his sisters and all his relations? I suppose they're all here—looking out of windows most likely, and thinking how they hate my hat. Oh, I wish I had never been born! It's all Eileen's fault. Oh, whatever shall I do? I wish I hadn't come!"

And with that she was on a green lawn under a green tree—not a beech tree, be sure, and the young man of the photograph was getting out of a long chair and standing by it holding out his hand. The maid and her cap-streamers were disappearing into the house.

"I *knew* you weren't old and ugly," he was saying. And she found herself answering, insanely:—

"I had to say that, so that you shouldn't be disappointed."

"I'm not disappointed," he said; "won't you sit down?"

She sat down in a wicker chair, and wished that the ground in England were in the habit of opening and swallowing the thoroughly imbecile and indiscreet. There was a moment's silence. In that moment she had leisure to note that he was exactly like his photograph—which happens, alas, so seldom, and that he was not dressed in khaki.

"We *are* friends," he said next, "aren't we?"

Jane said that she supposed so.

"You don't know what your letters have been to me," he went on.

Jane thought that she knew what his had been to her, and said nothing.

"And now the great question's got to be decided," he said, turning on her the bluest eyes in the world and a face set in a most admirable decision. "Can your friendship stand a strain? Is it the real thing? Can I trust to it?"

"I KNEW YOU WEREN'T OLD AND UGLY," HE WAS SAYING."

She found herself saying feverishly, "Oh, yes!" and wishing that she hadn't said anything.

"It's like this," he said. "I have lied to you and deceived you, and I don't see how I can dare to ask you to forgive me."

Thoughts of the honeysuckle and jasmine of the imaginary Thatched House splashed scarlet on to her cheeks.

"Let me tell you," he went on, gently. "Your letters—everything that you've written has made me nearer to you. I want you to try to like me as much as I want to be liked. But I

don't deserve to be liked at all. I've deceived you. I'm frightfully sorry, but I *have* deceived you."

"And I you," said Jane to herself. Aloud she said:—

"Don't break it to me. What is it?" and wondered at the firm calmness of her voice.

"It's this," he said. "I'm not a lonely soldier at all!"

"There's someone else," Jane said, without meaning to.

"No, no, no, no," said he; "it's not that at all. I'm not a soldier. I couldn't be. I was born lame. Only a little," he hastened to add, and stood up, made three steps towards her. His gait halted a little. Not enough to suggest deformity; just enough to plead for pity, sympathy, kindness . . . for something more?

"My cousin is in France," he said, and his mouth was firm-set, "let me tell you, and do please try not to hate me. I'm not a lonely soldier, but I've been lonely enough, God knows, till you came into my life with your letters and——"

"Go on," she said, pleating her handkerchief into precise folds.

"My cousin put that advertisement in about the lonely soldier just to see what answers he would get, and he sent the answers to me. He thought they would amuse me. He's a thoughtless, jolly sort of chap. He didn't understand. And among the answers there was your letter. And I answered it. And I pretended to be the lonely soldier so that you should go on writing to me. Because——"

A long pause.

"Because," said Jane, huskily.

"Because I felt that your letters were my life," he said. "Can you ever forgive me? Can you?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Jane, *éperdue;* "it wasn't quite fair, was it?"

"There was so much at stake," said he. "Try to forgive me, won't you?"

She looked at him swiftly and cast down her eyes. She liked his eyes, his voice, the pattern of his face, the blue of his eyes, the thick darkness of his hair. His lameness added an appeal that was well-nigh irresistible.

"And suppose I do forgive you?" she asked.

"Why, then," he said, turning on her those eyes that held and charmed her own, "I shall ask you for other things than forgiveness; other things; more beautiful, more magic things."

The miserable accusing scent of jasmine and honeysuckle arose all around her, choked her, stifled her.

"I can't forgive you," she said.

"Oh!" said he, forlornly.

"I've no right to," Jane hastened to say. "I'm not at all what you think. I've deceived you, too."

"Have you?" His smile might have shown, to an unprejudiced onlooker, a calm triumph, a certain relief.

"Yes: all that about the Thatched House," poor Jane went on, desperately; "it was lies, just plain lies. We live in a villa. And no honeysuckle and hardly any jasmine. I think I'd better go. I wish I'd never written to you. I wish——" Her voice failed and her eyes let fall two tears.

"Oh, don't," he cried. "Of course I knew. Of course I understood. You wanted to make your letters pretty and sweet for the lonely soldier, so you put in the jasmine and the honeysuckle. Did you think I didn't understand *that?*"

"Yes," said she, "but there isn't any Thatched House. At least—oh, it's horrid!—it's a public-house where my maid persuaded me to let you write because her aunt keeps it and——"

"Yes?" he said. "Oh, don't distress yourself."

The white-streamered maid was arranging a white and silver tea-table under another tree. A grey-haired lady was coming across the lawn towards them. But slowly.

"That's my mother," said he. "Can you forgive me? I love your letters—I feel I know your soul. You can break it off whenever you like if you find I'm not worth it," he said, "but my mother will be here in a moment. Oh, do let me tell her we're engaged."

The grey-haired lady stopped to speak to the white-streamered parlourmaid. Jane grasped the chance of the moment's delay.

"But I did lie to you about the jasmine and things. Can you forgive that? And I don't know you well enough to be engaged."

"No one will ever know me as well as you know me," he said, "and no one will ever know you as I know you. Our letters have done that."

"But the Thatched House," she said, desperately, "and the jasmine. So untruthful, when really there's nothing but geraniums and canariensis."

"But I knew all about that from the very beginning," he said. "I understood."

Her eyes questioned.

"Oh, dearest of all dear girls in all the world," he said, "give me a chance to make you love me."

Her eyes answered.

"You could, perhaps?"

"If it wasn't for the jasmine!" she said, "and the honeysuckle. Oh, how could I?"

The grey-haired lady drew near, smiling.

"I under and how you could. I love you for it. I know you better than you know me. One more confession. And with your hand in mine."

She trembled; but she gave the hand.

"Eileen has corresponded with me," he said, "daily, ever since you answered the advertisement of the lonely soldier."

"Eileen?" said Jane, aghast.

"She told me all about you: all about everything. Thank God for Eileen!" he said, fervently, and rose, her hand still in his, to meet his mother.

How to Become an Artist in Ten Minutes.

A CHAT ABOUT THE ART OF MR. ERNEST H. MILLS, THE FAMOUS ARTIST-ENTERTAINER.

MR. ERNEST H. MILLS.

TO-DAY we find on every hand famous artists and schools of art appealing to the public to learn "How to Sketch" or "How to Become an Artist in a Few Lessons," pointing out that almost anyone with a taste for drawing can become a successful artist.

Mr. Ernest H. Mills, in his entertainment, goes one better by showing how it can be done in ten minutes!

The entertainer who can appeal to the eye, as the lightning cartoonist can, is at a great advantage and can be sure of an interested audience in these days of art education.

Let us watch Mr. Mills as, with subtle and light touches of humour, he analyzes well-known types of famous humorous artists and by rapid illustration demonstrates how they work, dealing with half-a-dozen of them in as many minutes.

Standing before a large sheet of white paper, chalk in hand, after a few introductory remarks on the humour of art in general, he will proceed:—

"Take for instance that humorous authority on prehistoric times, Mr. E. T. Reed; his type may be analyzed as follows: a retroussé nose, a chronic smile, and an air of mild surprise! On this simple basis one can draw a hundred different types." It will be noticed in the accompanying picture that the prehistoric outline, as described, is not altered in any of the different characters—the Merchant, the Mechanic, the Masher, the Mistress, and Maid all having identical features.

PREHISTORIC TYPES—AFTER E. T. REED.
It will be noticed that all the above characters have identical features.

Treatment, on similar lines, making due allowance for difference of features of well-known politicians and other public men, produces most amusing caricatures, appreciated not only by audiences but by the subjects themselves, and what is of more importance nowadays often results in the sale of the same to the benefit of our wounded—which in Mr. Mills's case now runs into hundreds of pounds.

Let us again watch the artist as he proceeds to draw half-a-dozen noses in a row. Here they are :—

Foreheads of different proportions and various styles of hair are next added :—

Then come mouths and chins as here shown :—

Eyes expressing "Do it now," "Wait and see," etc., complete the caricatures of half-a-dozen politicians which will be readily recognized.

Mr. Mills next has a word of encouragement for would-be artists who soon realize the truth that "Art is long," and who find it, in fact, neither short nor easy.

"Drawings will not always come right the first time," remarks the artist. "Suppose," he says, "John Hassall's 'Wee Macgreegor' accidentally came like this"—he then draws the well-known features, but somehow they seem to have "slipped"—anyway, he adds: "A man of Hassall's resource would not be discouraged by such a trifle as this, but gathering up the scattered features in a hospital bandage and making sundry rapid additions, the result turned *upside down* would be an entirely different type"—and suiting the action to the word the artist not only shows how one type can be turned into another but springs a surprise on his audience.

After this comes the world-famous Captain Bairnsfather, in whose type Mr. Mills discovers two or three eggs (in spite of the present price he uses three!), a cottage-loaf, a giant potato (allotment grown), which sprouts with remarkable results — "Old Bill" to the life!

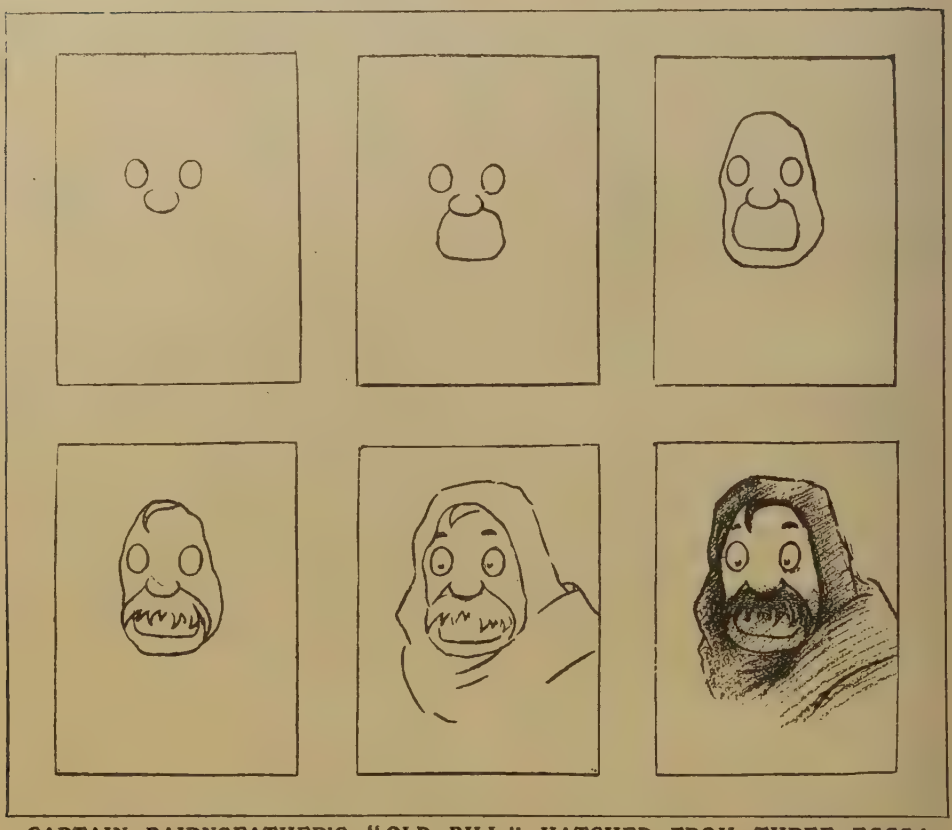
The fact that the human figure is most difficult to draw leads the artist to suggest an ingenious way of getting over the difficulty—"a glad eye and neat ankles" are all that are required—cleverly distributed furs complete the picture and show us as dainty a study of a fashionable type as one could wish—though he is quick to point out that with the fair sex fashions nowadays are supposed to take second place, and he pays a passing tribute—pictorially—to

A first attempt at a portrait of Wee Macgreegor goes wrong, but—

add a hospital bandage, and then—

turn the drawing upside down.

The result is a completely different type!



CAPTAIN BAIRNSFATHER'S "OLD BILL," HATCHED FROM THREE EGGS!

the woman war-worker either in the Red Cross uniform or other distinguishing costume, and though this is not the subject for humorous treatment as a rule, Mr. Mills is sure of a sympathetic response.

Among women-artists whom Mr. Mills deals with are "Fish" (of the *Tatler*), whose quaintly-decorative egg-like heads are easier to imitate than to originate—who else would have thought of drawing faces minus noses?

OVERCOMING THE DIFFICULTY OF DRAWING THE HUMAN FIGURE.

A "glad eye" and neat ankles—with the addition of cleverly-distributed furs—are all that are required.

"FISH'S" FAIR SEX TYPE IN TROUBLE.

"I want to blow my nose, but Miss Fish hasn't given me one!"

Among others are Hilda Cowham and Mabel Lucie Attwell, whose studies of children form such an

THE "ATTWELL" AND "COWHAM" KIDS.
A contrast in legs.

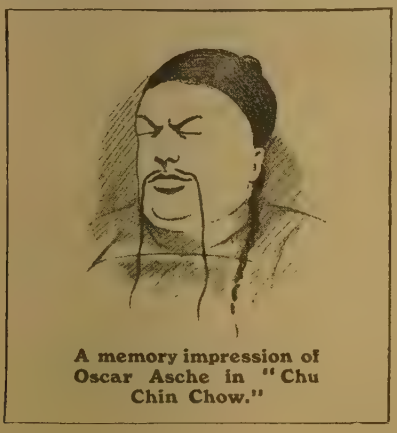
interesting contrast—the legs of the former being of the "Chippendale" order, as Mr. Mills remarks in a telling "aside."

trait of the Chairman" in sixty seconds in colours requires considerable practice and nerve and should only be attempted with discretion.

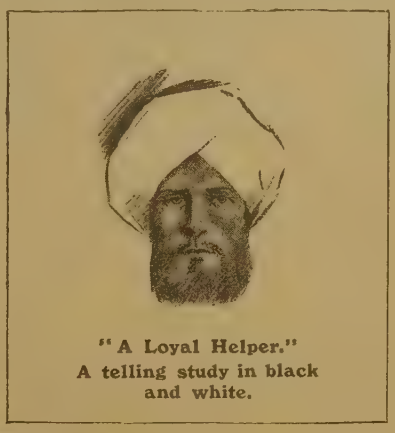
Mr. Ernest H. Mills drawing a sixty-seconds caricature-portrait in colours of a recent Lord Mayor of Newcastle.

It is as well to get a good look at one's subject beforehand and to jot down if possible a rough sketch on the back of a programme or other odd piece of paper.

Mr. Mills usually concludes with the suggestion that failing all else the artist always has the pavement to fall back on or rather sit on!—a tribute to that humblest (and often exceedingly able) of all artists—the pavement artist—one of whom is here suggested



A memory impression of Oscar Asche in "Chu Chin Chow."



"A Loyal Helper."
A telling study in black and white.

The suggested meeting of these two types and their mutual astonishment at their funny legs is shown above.

To produce a surprise "Portas Mr. Mills imagines Heath Robinson, that "artist in absurdities," might one day depict him — a study of "shabby benevolence"!

SHABBY BENEVOLENCE ON THE PAVEMENT.
(With apologies to W. Heath Robinson.)

A Posy of Posers

The Puzzles of some Men in Blue

By HENRY E DUDENEY

A GROUP of wounded and convalescent soldiers were seated around a bright fire at their quarters in an old town near the South Coast. It was Christmas time, and they were in a cheery mood, talking of their pleasant memories of past Yuletides—of feasts and merry-making, of round games and frolics, of acting charades and practical jokes, of authentic ghost stories and family traditions.

"I don't know why," said Robinson, "but in the old days I always had a fancy for puzzles at Christmas. I always preferred those crackers that contained little posers to try the wits of the company, and a cousin of mine, who always turned up at our annual gatherings, invariably brought along some new puzzle to perplex us. I don't understand it—it is a sort of paradox—why so many people enjoy having their brains racked on these particular happy occasions. But it is a fact."

"I quite agree with Robinson," Hilman said. "Some of us welcome a good puzzle at any time, but there are hundreds of people who regard them as appropriate adjuncts to the turkey and plum-pudding. You will invariably find that when the mince-pies go round somebody asks: 'Why does a chicken cross the road?' or 'Why did they throw Joseph into the pit?' or 'Why does a chimney swallow smoke?' or 'When is an apple pie?' It is mere trifling with a serious subject."

"'Serious' is good," said Prodgers. "Personally, I like an occasional good word puzzle, though I draw the line at conundrums. A friend of mine out in Flanders asked me what was the most awkward time for a train to start, and his answer was 12.50, because it is ten to one if you catch it! But I forgave him this when he told me that he had sent home a letter simply addressed:—

WOOD
JOHN
ENGLAND

and it was safely delivered. Those Post Office people are very smart. Can any of you read that address in its completeness?"

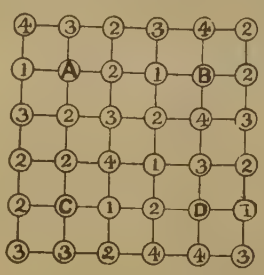
"Speaking of Flanders," said Hilman, after they had mastered Prodgers's little puzzle, "reminds me of an incident that happened out there which will interest you. A man named Jones set out to walk from A.... to B...., and on the road he met his friend Kenward, ten miles from A...., who had left B.... at exactly the same time. Jones executed his commission at B.... and, without delay, set out on his return journey, while Kenward as promptly returned from A.... to B..... They met twelve miles from B..... Of course, each walked at a uniform rate throughout. Now, how far is A.... from B....?"

This simple problem perplexed some of the men a good deal. Robinson was the first to get the correct answer, by algebra, but I will show the reader a simple rule by which the distance may be found by anyone in a few seconds without the use of a pencil. In fact, it is quite absurdly easy—when you know how to do it.

"Those popular missing-word puzzles are generally pretty easy," said Jeffries, "but here is a rather hard one that beat me for some time. Each of the five missing words is composed of the same seven letters."

No ..... to glory, he ..... the blows
Of the ..... that threaten his life;
Then quickly ..... to an inn that he knows,
Where the host is no ..... of strife.

"I will show you a little puzzle that was given to me the other day," said Hilman, producing the diagram of which a copy is given.

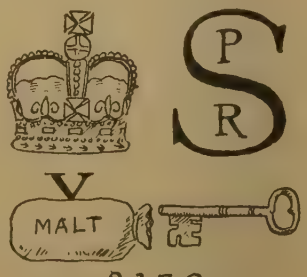


"The puzzle is to start from A and select eight numbers that add up to twenty by passing along the lines, so that they shall all be connected in a string. Do the same from B, C, and D—eight numbers summing to twenty in each case. No number can be used twice. Thus, if you start at A you might count 1, 4, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, 3=20, and, working in the same way from D, you will find that square also adds up twenty. But when you try B and C this method breaks down, as you get 21 and 19. It is far easier than it looks if you attack it in the right way."

One of them soon got a correct answer, while Prodgers was working at something on a piece of paper. He now produced the result.

"Can any of you read this?" he asked.

Later he explained that the answer was: "The Crown Prince sent Von Moltke some Limburger cheese."



2153
7604
9757

LIMBURGER CHEESE.

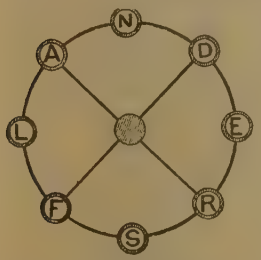
"That's all right," said Robinson, "except that I can't see where you get the 'sent.'"

"Why, the scent is in the cheese," replied Prodgers. Then he dodged the book that somebody threw at his head.

"It is not difficult to catch people in that way," said Hilman. "I told my little sister the other day that she had a hole in her stocking. She indignantly denied it, upon which I said, 'Then how did you put it on?'"

"Look here," Benson said, "this is a puzzle that I made myself the other day, so I am certain that it is quite new. You know that 2 and 2 make 4, and that 2 multiplied by 2 also makes 4. Now, can you find two other numbers, composed only of ones, which give the same result by addition and multiplication. Of course, 11 and 1 are very near, but they won't quite do, because added they make 12, but multiplied they make only 11."

They had a good try at this, but had to give it up. Perhaps the reader will be more successful. Robinson suggested (1+1) and (1+1), but Benson explained that this was still 2 and 2, whereas he required different numbers from 2, though they need not be both alike.



"Have any of you seen the 'Flanders Wheel' puzzle?" asked Hilman.

He produced a diagram, of which we give a copy, and eight lettered counters.

"You have to move the eight counters one at a time from circle to to circle until the word FLANDERS can be correctly read round the rim of the wheel, as at present, only with F in the upper circle now occupied by the N. Of course, two counters cannot be in a circle at the same time."

"Then you must move either A, D, F, or R first of all," said Robinson.

"Obviously," Hilman replied, "as there are no stopping-places between the circles. It can be done in thirty moves."

Though somebody succeeded in more than thirty moves, they decided to postpone their further trials for the discovery of the minimum answer.

"If you have not actually excluded conundrums from your consideration," said Burgess, with characteristic modesty, "I should like to ask you one. If a cannibal had eaten his own wife and wished to express his approbation of the act, how could he best do so by using a single word?" His answer was "Gladiator" (glad I ate her).

"If you asked the letters of the alphabet, in due order, to come to luncheon," proposed Hilman, "which letters could not accept your kind invitation until later in the day?" After they had given it up, he said it would be the last six letters, because they could not come till after T.

"Touching on the alphabet," said Robinson, "reminds me of a puzzle game I invented the other night. I call it the 'Match Alphabet.' You are aware that there are only fifteen letters that can be formed—that is properly formed—with matches or straight lines. They are A, E, F, H, I, K, L, M, N, T, V, W, X, Y, and Z. A subject is given and then everybody tries to construct the best sentence with matches, using only the letters I have named. For example, I will give you as the subject some remark supposed to be made by the Kaiser. Now, who can compose the most appropriate sentence?"

Owing to a shortage of matches, they had to content themselves with pencils and paper. They unanimously agreed in the end that Hilman's sentence, as follows, was the best: "I, WILLIAM, WILL KILL MY ENEMY WITH AN INFINITE HATE."

Jeffries immediately set up, "HILMAN TAKETH THE KAKE WITHAL." And they laughed at his method of dodging the S in TAKES and the C in CAKE.

"Did any of you ever hear of the boy who said he could prove by logic that a jam tart is better than heaven?" asked Robinson. "This was the way he did it: 'Nothing is better than heaven; a jam tart is better than nothing; therefore, a jam tart is better than heaven.'"

"Good," said Prodgers, "but I think it was beaten by the little girl who proved that the moon is made of green cheese in this way: 'The moon is either made of green cheese or it is not. We know that it is not; therefore it is.'"

"Speaking of youngsters," Burgess said, "reminds me of the precocious boy who, on being charged by his mother with stealing her apples, replied: 'I haven't touched one of them, mother, really!' 'You little story-teller!' she exclaimed. 'Just listen. I know exactly how many apples I bought last night. When I looked at them this morning two had gone, and I then ate one myself. When I looked at them later, a quarter of what I last left had disappeared, but I took a third of the remainder for dumplings and said nothing. An hour later I found that half of those left had been stolen, and I then gave one to Mrs. Collins's little girl for posting a letter for me. When I looked again I had been robbed of half of what I last left, and there was only this single apple remaining.' 'Mother,' said the boy, 'that is the one that I told you I had never touched! I would scorn to tell a lie.' How many apples had the woman at the start?"

"Look at this," said Hilman, producing a sketch from which our illustration is made. "I copied it from a little girl's album, in which it was drawn by

a certain maker of puzzles. You are simply asked to 'Find the Cat.' I confess it beat me. At first I thought it was a trivial absurdity designed as suitable to a mere child's intelligence, but was amused when shown the answer."

Though nobody succeeded in finding the cat, doubtless the reader will indicate its location at the first glance.

"I suppose you all know this old puzzle," said Jeffries. "A farmer left seventeen horses to be divided amongst his three sons in the following proportions. To the eldest, one-half; to the second, one-third; and to the youngest, one-ninth. How should they be divided?"

"Yes; I think we all know that," said Robinson, "but it can't be done. The answer always given is a fallacy."

"I suppose you mean," Prodgers suggested, "the answer where they borrow another chap's horse to make eighteen for the purpose of the division. Then the three sons take 9, 6, and 2 respectively, and return the borrowed horse to the lender."

"Exactly," replied Robinson, "and each son receives more than his share."

"Stop!" cried Benson. "That can't be right. If each man received more than his share the total must exceed seventeen horses, but 9, 6, and 2 add up to 17 correctly."

"At first sight that certainly looks queer," Robinson admitted, "but the explanation is that if each man received his true fractional share, these fractions would add up to less than seventeen. In fact, there would be a fraction left undistributed. The thing can't really be done."

"That's just where you are all wrong," said Jeffries. "The terms of the will can be exactly carried out, without any mutilation of a horse."

To their astonishment, he showed how it was possible. How should the horses be divided in strict accordance with the directions?

"Speaking of things that can't be done," remarked Hilman, "they are, of course, innumerable. But there are many little things that are curious. For example, if you place a match across the nail of the middle finger and under the first and third fingers of the same hand, you cannot break it in that position. That is, you cannot break it with those three fingers unassisted. No, Benson, you must not rest your finger on the table in that way."

"You can't get out of a chair," said Robinson, "without either bending your body forward or putting your feet under it, if you sit fairly back on the chair. And you can't stand with your heels against a wall and pick up something from the floor."

"And because you can hold a thing in your right hand, it does not follow that you can hold it in your left," added Benson. As an example, try your left elbow."

"What is it (you must not ask me whether it is an animal, a bird, or a reptile)," said Jeffries, "that has this peculiarity: One leg cannot be raised from the ground without raising two or more?"

This little question perplexed them for some minutes.

Burgess then presented this puzzle, which kept them going for the rest of the evening. A tradesman whose morals had become corrupted during the war

by a course of profiteering went to the length of introducing a pair of false scales. It will be seen from the illustration that one arm is longer than the other, though they are purposely so drawn as to give no clue to the answer. As a consequence, it happened that in one of the cases exhibited eight of the little packets (it does not matter what they contain) exactly balanced three of the canisters, while in the other case one packet appeared to be of the same weight as six canisters. Now, as the true weight of one canister was known to be exactly one ounce, what was the true weight of the eight packets?

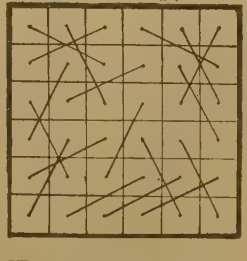
(The answers to the above puzzles will appear next month, together with some new "Perplexities.")

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES.

432.—MAKING A WORD SQUARE.

THE first diagram shows the constructed word square, and the lines in the second diagram indicate the pairs of letters that have been exchanged.

L	A	S	H	E	S
A	R	T	E	R	Y
S	T	O	R	M	S
H	E	R	M	I	T
E	R	M	I	N	E
S	Y	S	T	E	M



433.—THE POSTAGE STAMPS PUZZLE.

THE number of postage stamps in the album must have been 2,519.

434.—GIVING THEM NAMES.

THE method was clearly to find some name the letters of which, differently arranged, would spell something to fit the man to whom the name was applied. Thus the man who loved to ramble was called ANDREW, because the letters spell WANDER; the thief was called DENNIS, because he had SINNED; the man who had lived at Cologne was called HENRI, because the letters also spell RHINE; the poet was called CYRIL, because he had written a LYRIC; the botanist, interested in cone-bearing trees, was named CHARLES, because the letters spell LARCHES; and the crank who had a mad idea that a building used for storing grain should be painted a bright vermilion was appropriately named BERNARD, since the letters spell RED BARN. Therefore, the reader will not be surprised to hear that the man who had wounded his own mother by firing at her with a gun was called THOMAS, because he SHOT MA!

435.—THE MILK-AND-WATER MAN.

THE man delivered 32 quarts of pure milk in street number one, 24 quarts of milk (mixed with water) in the second street, 18 quarts in the third street, and 13½ quarts in the fourth street. He had thus sold 87½ quarts of pure milk in all, and had remaining 40½ quarts pure milk mixed with 55½ quarts of water.

436.—MISSING WORDS.

RATS—TARS—STAR—ARTS.